

SOLIDARITY FOR SOCIAL REVOLUTION

Paper of the Solidarity National Group

No. 1.



15^P

Anarchism and feminism.
Official secrets. Pub bars gays.
Highlands Fabricators strike. Italy.

The strike at Highlands Fabricators Nigg yard in the spring of 1977 was noteworthy both for the ruthlessness displayed by the Company, and for the extremes of co-operation between management and Union officials in their attempts to end the strike. The Company advertised a non-existent strikers' mass meeting to sow confusion and disrupt the workers' organisation. The Unions flew the entire Shop Stewards Committee to London to be told by national officials that there must be a return to work - with all the plane fares paid for by Highlands Fabricators. Although it took place just under a year ago we think the story of the strike raises issues of sufficient importance to merit describing here.

Highlands Fabricators is jointly owned by 2 giant firms, Brown and Root of Houston and George Wimpey, and was formed specifically to build platforms for the North Sea oilfields, at Nigg on the Cromarty Firth in the north of Scotland. The shop floor workers, mainly but not exclusively men, are 100% unionised, largely through the Boilermakers, AUEW (Construction and Engineering sections), and EETPU. The workforce varies from around 800 to 2,000, being periodically boosted by the importation of considerable numbers of travelling workers, mainly from central Scotland. Workers are taken on and laid off according to the stage of the platform's construction. The platform building industry is currently depressed and if there is not another order to follow when one platform is completed, it's the dole for everyone.

In November 1976 the management pressed the Stewards Committee to sign a 'Declaration of Intent' on a productivity agreement designed to increase productivity by 40%. Under strong pressure from both management and the full-time officials the Committee by a majority agreed to sign the document without it ever being put to the workforce. The shop floor only learnt of the agreement for definite some weeks later when "Nigg Worker" (produced by Socialist Worker supporters), having 'obtained' a copy of the agreement, reproduced it in a bulletin circulated round the yard. The anger felt by many workers at this episode was to influence attitudes in the strike. In January 1977 an "Addendum" to the productivity agreement was signed under conditions of the greatest secrecy. Only the full-time officials and members of the Negotiating Committee of the Shop Stewards Committee ever saw copies of the document.

The immediate issue of the strike was a cut in the "Manhours Saved" (sic) part of the Platform Completion Bonus. This was paid according to the number of worker hours taken to build the platform, and was expected to be worth £600 to a skilled grade worker with a full attendance record since the

start of the platform. Few bonuses operate without severe disadvantages to the workers, but this one was particularly bad. It was extremely complicated and virtually impossible for the workers to monitor. Further, being dependent on reducing the number of worker hours spent on the job, it set up a conflict between fighting redundancies and keeping up the bonus level. Although some of the Stewards had their suspicions earlier, Highlands Fabricators gave no indication that the bonus was going to be lower than anticipated, until a sudden announcement on March 1st 1977.

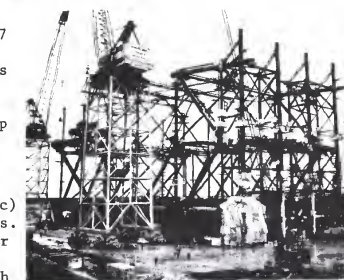
1st MARCH: Highlands Fabricators management ignore usual procedure by releasing new bonus figures to the workforce through the site foremen, without going through the Shop Stewards Committee. The bonus is now to be £200 instead of £600. The Stewards Committee meet and after considerable discussion decide unanimously to recommend strike action to the workforce. Mass meetings of each of the 3 shifts are held.

Why has the bonus been cut by two-thirds? The Company is to argue that it's because there has not been as many redundancies as expected. But, why should workers have to choose between mass redundancies and a wage cut? Some allege that there has not been sufficient allowance made for design changes. There is evidence that poor management has held up the job. Bad communication between foremen, supervision who do not have sufficient knowledge of engineering. One shift would put up some fabrication - then the next shift would undo the work and do it again differently.

Most of the workforce seem to look on the situation as opposition to a wage cut - they had expected £600 and are only getting £200. By a substantial majority the workers vote for strike action. The strike starts at midnight.

2nd - 3rd MARCH: No outcome from talks involving shop stewards, full-time officials, and management.

4th MARCH: A mass meeting. The officials - Gray (AUEW), Lafferty (AUEW Construction), McCartney (Boilermakers), and Souza (EETPU) - argue that the workers should return to work to safeguard the yard's future. The stewards by a majority recommend the strike



The platform under construction shortly before the strike



continue. The workers vote unanimously to stay out.

Over the next few days all workers at the yard receive threatening letters. The letters are from Highlands Fabricators, dated March 4th, and state that if the workforce stay on strike a new order being awarded by Chevron will be lost and the yard will be closed.

The threat was almost certainly phoney propaganda. All the evidence suggests that design work, ordering of materials, and other plans for the order were too far advanced for it to be cancelled without great difficulty. The industry orientated magazine "The Oilman" in its issue of 19th March, when the strike was still going strong, confidently predicted that Chevron's new order would still go to Highlands Fabricators.

5th MARCH: A large advert addressed to the Nigg workers appears in the local and national press. "We, National Officials of the following unions, instruct all our members to report back to work immediately" is the message from Boilermakers, AUEW, and EETPU officials. The Company's letter to the strikers, dated March 4th, advises them that an advert from their Union will be in the papers the next day - the ad appears to be a joint effort by the officials and Highlands Fabricators, with the Company paying the bill.

6th MARCH: The yard is open for a return to work. No-one returns to work.

7th MARCH: Rab Wilson, Convener of the Shop Stewards Committee, states in the press that the officials were wrong to place the ad in the papers - any decision to return to work could only be made by a mass meeting.



Highlands Fabricators' £15m fabrication yard at Nigg Bay

In pubs and shops all over the area posters appear advertising a mass meeting for the Nigg workforce at 8am the next day. The Energy Secretary Dickson Mabon informs STUC General Secretary Jimmy Milne that the government is anxious for an early return to work.

8th MARCH : Jimmy Milne, invited north by AUEW official Tommy Gray, the officials and hundreds of workers arrive for the meeting. However it transpires that no meeting has been called by the stewards, and that the extensive advertising for the meeting is the work of Highlands Fabricators management! Presumably their intention is to sow confusion amongst the strikers and weaken their organisation. However their plan backfires - the workers anger is directed at the Company.

In talks in Aberdeen involving Jimmy Milne, Highlands Fabricators managing director Kevin Barry, Chevron managing director Glen Shurman, 3 of the officials, and a delegation of 6 from the Stewards Committee, the Chevron representatives claim that if there is not a quick return to work Chevron will take their next rig away from Highlands Fabricators.

9th MARCH : The shop stewards, meeting to consider the report-back from the Aberdeen meeting, vote 10-6 to recommend a return to work, despite some stewards arguing that Chevrans' threats are a bluff.

10th MARCH : At the mass meeting convener Rab Wilson puts the majority view of the Stewards Committee that the strike should end because of the risk of losing the next order.

His speech is greeted by uproar. Workers shout "The shop stewards have got cold feet and sold us down the river" and "If we give way on this the next rig won't be worth having" Loud objections are made to a vote being taken in the absence of the travelling workers who have returned to their homes. After discussion the stewards agree to adjourn the meeting till March 15th to allow the travelling workers to be present.

15th MARCH : The convener once more puts the stewards recommendation for a return to work. By now many workers see the strike as one of principle, and consider the future balance of forces in the yard to be at stake - the productivity deal is there waiting to be implemented. The workforce votes by a small majority to stay out.

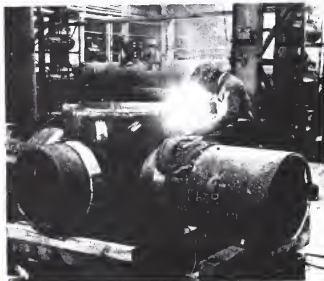
21st MARCH : At the request of AUEW (Const.) official Baldwin Highlands Fabricators pay for the entire Shop Stewards Committee to be flown to London to meet national officials. Urged by the officials to recommend a return to work to another mass meeting, the stewards refuse. Baldwin presses for the opportunity to himself address a mass meeting of the workforce. The stewards agree.

23rd MARCH : Tommy Lafferty, AUEW Construction official, states on TV that the yard will close unless the workforce vote the next day to return to work.

24th MARCH : At the mass meeting Baldwin, speaking on behalf of his national executive, states that the workforce must end the strike or the yard will close. After a rowdy meeting, the vote is confused but Baldwin announces a majority for a return to work, and immediately jumps off the platform to leave. He is surrounded, jostled and pinned against a barbed wire fence by angry workers. Police intervene and escort him to a waiting car.

25th MARCH : Police are present at the yard gates as the workforce returns to work.

In the negotiations following the return to work the "Manhours Saved" bonus was fixed at £197, and a new component worth £192 was added to the bonus. Since the £192 barely



Working in one of the fabrication shops at Nigg

covered wages lost during the strike the outcome, in financial terms, was certainly a defeat.

The strike was noteworthy for the ruthlessness of Highlands Fabricators management. They had no qualms about threatening to close the yard, putting 1,500 workers on the dole. Their move in advertising a non-existent mass meeting would not have disgraced ex-President Nixon's Dirty Tricks Department. The threat of the yard's closure is always likely to be used by Highlands Fabricators - they have stated in the past that there is not much at Nigg that could not be packed up and floated away, and they have always refused to give the Local Authority any guarantee about the life of the yard. This is similar to the situation in the oil industry generally. The Companies' concern is with short term profitability. When the "boom" is over they can always pack up and go off to make money elsewhere in the world.

The other side of Highlands Fabricators strike strategy was their close co-operation with the Trade Union officials and official T.U. structure - against the workforce. From the very start of the strike the management and the officials shared the same immediate objective - for the workforce to return to work immediately without insisting on any prior concessions by the Company. To achieve this they worked closely together in such moves as the press adverts and flying the stewards to London.

This co-operation between management and officials against the wishes of the workforce occurs constantly at Highlands Fabricators. In interviews with shop stewards and other workers we were told repeatedly that the officials worked much more closely with management than they did with the shop stewards, and that in disputes the officials had a definite tendency to side with management. Shop stewards described how management used the officials - if they were putting forward a controversial proposal they would first contact the officials and informally work out a deal with them. Then when the management's proposal was put to the shop stewards committee the management and officials would present a united front for its acceptance. We were also told by many workers of other close ties between management and officials. They alleged that when visiting the area for negotiations the 4 officials - Gray, Lafferty, McCartney, and Souza - frequently stayed overnight in accommodation paid for by the company, either in the camp at Nigg or in a hotel. Workers also alleged that officials, particularly Lafferty and McCartney, were often to be seen socialising and drinking with management.

This collusion between management

Continued next page

HIGHLANDS FABRICATORS Contd. from p.9.

and Trade Union officialdom is a central feature of employment today, in both the private and state sectors. Just as the Labour government uses the TUC General Council to hold back rank and file trade unionists nationally, so 'progressive' managements use the local full time officials to keep their employees in check. In many situations workers are now too strongly organised to be smashed into submission in open battle - its more effective to have them stabbed in the back by people who are supposed to be their allies. The T.U. hierarchy may often believe that they are acting in the best interests of workers, but they become remote from the experiences and beliefs of the rank and file and, constantly mixing with management and government representatives, they acquire some power and influence in the capitalist system. The T.U. structure they are working within accepts the system's priorities of profitability and the need for "orderly industrial relations". T.U. officialdom is now an integral

mass meetings. On the other hand they can become divorced from the workforce generally and have on occasions, such as over the productivity deal, acted to keep information and decision making power away from the shop floor. The Nigg situation seems similar to what is happening nationally. There is a tendency for Shop Stewards Committees to become incorporated into the official T.U. structure, but with a conscious and militant workforce it is a tendency which could be reversed.

An outstanding feature of the dispute was the militancy and independence shown by the workforce in several times rejecting the officials and shop stewards calls for a return to work. Workers told us that among those most involved in the strike were many local workers (usually considered less militant than the travelling workers) and many who had previously not been much involved in union issues. It is interesting that this militancy was displayed without the workforce containing any politically organised groups of

there is bound to be more conflict in the future as Highlands Fabricators compete for orders in a depressed market. The platform building companies are increasingly having to tender for contracts on a fixed price basis. This puts greater pressure on them to reduce their costs - and the workers are first in line to be squeezed.

The great danger is that in the scramble for orders the workers in the different yards will be played off against each other. A first step towards fighting this would be a re-vitalisation of the Oil Liaison Committee, a body which up till November 1977 regularly drew together representatives of the Stewards Committees of the platform building yards in Scotland and North England. Strong links need to be made between the workers in the different yards, not only within Britain but throughout Europe, so that there can develop a co-ordinated fight, controlled by the rank and file, to protect and improve working conditions, and in the longer



Strikers mass meeting - Convener Rab Wilson speaks to the workforce

part of the capitalist system - positive change can only come from the mass of working people.

At the beginning of the dispute the Shop Stewards Committee were fighting against the cut in the bonus along with the workforce as a whole, and came out in criticism of such moves as the Officials' adverts in the press. After a week of the dispute however the majority of the Committee started pressing for a return to work, and in the later stages of the strike the Committee allowed themselves to be used in the officials' attempts to railroad the workforce back to work. In the yard generally the Stewards Committee are genuine representatives of the work-in that they are directly elected by the shop floor, remain workers at the yard, and can be mandated through

significant size or influence. Unfortunately evidence suggests that the strikes' defeat caused some demoralisation. A short time later when the platform had been finished and work on the new Chevron order had yet to get fully underway, the management were able to greatly reduce the workforce by calling for voluntary redundancies. There was no organised opposition to this and surprisingly many workers - around 480 - volunteered.

Nevertheless there is little doubt that the length of the strike and the determination shown by a large section of the workforce worried Highlands Fabricators, and augurs well for future struggles. Since the strike there has been conflict over productivity proposals (which we've not the space to describe here) and

run to fundamentally challenge the power and priorities of the giant oil industry companies. Mike V.

We are very grateful to the workers at Highlands Fabricators who gave up their time to talk to us and give information about the issues reported here. Many thanks also to those people who helped in the research who are not members of Solidarity. The responsibility for the contents and politics of the article does of course lie completely with Solidarity. Acknowledgements also to the following publications which were consulted in the research: Cromarty - the scramble for oil by G. Rosie; Nigg Worker, published by Socialist Worker supporters, Nigg. We would welcome comments on the article and further information about the situation at Nigg from workers at the yard.

Scottish Womens Liberation Conference

Womens Liberation conferences have been organised along similar lines for several years now, but there have been increasing feelings of dissatisfaction and frustration with national conferences in particular. The 'old' method of organisation was that the planning group received suggestions for workshops which they arranged on the timetable as best they could, so that there were always a large number of choices and range of subjects.

After the last national conference a paper was circulated on the role of the WL national conference - the suggestions which were made included:

- a) campaigns which have their own conferences and structures e.g. Womens Aid and the National Abortion Campaign, should not take up workshop time at national conferences. There could be stalls set up to pass on information about these campaigns.
- b) skills exchange, e.g. car maintenance and silk-screen printing, would be better done on a local level.
- c) social events should be restricted to the Saturday evening. A womens festival could be organised at a different time.
- d) there should be a few issues isolated for really deep discussion.
- e) the issues should be discussed in small groups which would stay together for the whole conference. Some system of random allocation should be used to form the groups.

Since these suggestions were made there has not been another national conference, so there is no indication of how the new method will work with around 3000 women. However, at least two smaller conferences have tried the system of staying in the same small, randomly chosen groups for the whole conference and limiting the number of subjects discussed.

One of these was the Scottish WL conference held in December in St Andrews, which about 100 women attended.

Three topics had been chosen for discussion, these were:

- 1) Separatism.
- 2) How does the Womens Liberation Movement feel about the socialist current within itself?
- 3) Women and violence.

These topics were discussed with particular reference to "What are

good strategy and tactics for a feminist revolution?" The conference divided up into small, randomly chosen groups of about 10 women. Most women stayed in the same group for the three sessions.

In the first session on separatism there was more agreement than I had expected. Very few women in Scotland identify themselves as separatist, and there are many women: heterosexual, bisexual, and lesbian, who totally disagree with the separatist standpoint of completely excluding men from their lives. A lot of women thought that separatist communes were useful as a haven for women to escape to for short periods or as an example that



shows that we can live without men if we choose, but did not agree that separatism was the way to revolution. The discussion also highlighted the confusions which exist between separatism, lesbian feminism as a political choice, and lesbianism as a sexuality issue. It is interesting to note that most of the separatists who were at the conference did not take part in the discussions but met in their own group throughout the conference.

The discussion on the socialist current in the womens movement revealed a lot of confusion about the meaning of socialism and anarchism, those of us who mean the same thing by both words probably confused matters even more (do we need a new word?). There seems to be a lot of fear in the movement that the Socialist Feminists are going to put across the "Party line" and recruit us all to their male dominated groups.

This may have been the case a couple of years ago but it isn't now: a lot of socialist feminists are non-aligned or are dissatisfied with the left groups they have been in contact with and a few are libertarian socialists. During this discussion most groups talked

about which came first: capitalism or patriarchy, and if one falls will the other follow. A lot of women at the conference seemed to agree that both must be fought together, it was no good fighting one and hoping the other would go away.

The workshop on women and violence seemed to be the one at which most differences arose. Some women felt that violence was a very "male" way of organizing and whereas we must learn to defend ourselves, using violence as a strategy was aping a male stereotype we were seeking to destroy. But other women felt that as violence was conditioned out of us we should fight against that conditioning and become more aggressive. This of course resulted in discussion of how far you could take self-defence (if one woman is raped is it self-defence for a group of women to go and attack that man?). There was also a discussion on the difference between violence against people and violence against property.

On the whole it was a good

conference but for me it was marred by two events. One was the hysterical attitude of the St. Andrews Student Union officials who had refused to duplicate some of the conference documents because they said some of the words were offensive (words like brothel, homosexual, and masturbation which can be found in most dictionaries and most student rag-mags). The other was the equally hysterical attitude of some separatist women who objected to the presence of a male child in the disco.

The next Scottish Womens Liberation Conference will be held in Edinburgh in September; there will also be a Scottish Women's Festival in Edinburgh one weekend in June. The next national Womens Liberation conference will be held in Birmingham in April.

Nina Woodcock

'ZERO' is an anarchist/anarcha-feminist newsmagazine produced monthly by a mixed collective. It can be obtained at 20p per issue (or £3 sub) from ZERO, Rising Free, 182 Upper Street, London N.1.

inside:
Wanking;
Women;
Waste;
Inner City;
Russia;
Poland;

solid arity

FOR SOCIAL REVOLUTION

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15p



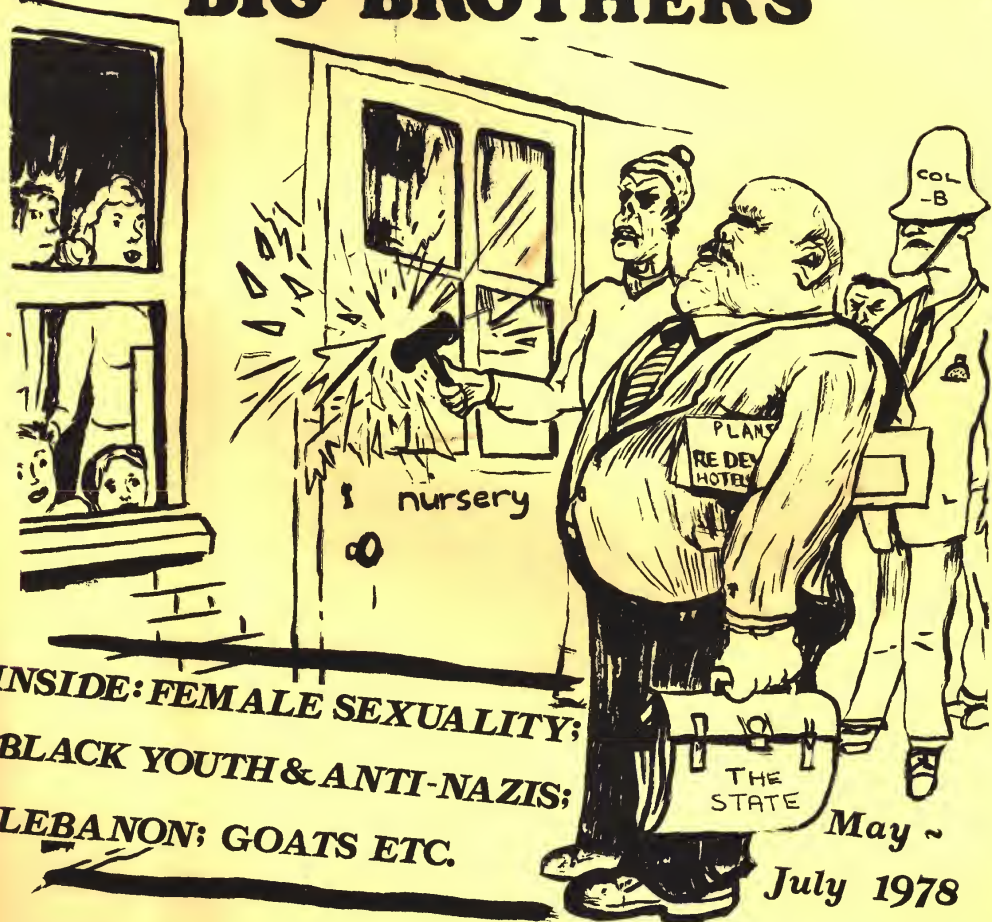
NHS: PLANNING FOR CHAOS

SOLIDARITY FOR SOCIAL REVOLUTION

No. 3

BIG BROTHER'S

15p



INSIDE: FEMALE SEXUALITY;

BLACK YOUTH & ANTI-NAZIS;

LEBANON; GOATS ETC.

May ~

July 1978

SMASH AND GRAB

SOLIDARITY

Holidays in the sun

After Solidarity's merger with Social Revolution we are having a week of holiday/conference/celebration on Friday 21st - 28th July at Lauriston Hall in the South West of Scotland.

Partly this is to help us to catch up a bit on personal politics and the atmosphere should be more relaxed than at a typical Solidarity weekend conference. All Solidarity members, friends, critics, sympathisers and their kids are welcome.

The rates are £2.80 per day inclusive and half for kids, but it should work out less if you can only just afford that because we will be operating a (voluntary) incomes sharing policy for the week.

BOOK AS SOON AS POSSIBLE to John Cowan, (3R) 17 Cheviot Crescent, Fintry, Dundee. Please enclose a £5 deposit (£2.50 for kids) which will eventually be subtracted from your "bill".

Ideas for the week and offers to lead off discussions, games etc would also be welcome.

Get in Touch?

ABERDEEN - Solidarity, Box 23, 163, King Street, Aberdeen

MANCHESTER - Solidarity, c/o S.D. Ritchie, 61, Hornchurch Court, Bonsall Street, Manchester.

OXFORD - c/o ECA Books, 74, Cowley Road, Oxford.

LONDON - c/o 123, Latham Road, London E6.

If you want to find out about Solidarity contacts in other areas, write to the National Secretary via the Aberdeen Group. International Correspondance and Subscriptions (£2 for a string of pearls of wisdom) should be sent to the London Group, who will also be doing the next issue of SOLIDARITY magazine.



"Looks like fun for a change, they're playing charades."

"What's that comrade supposed to be miming?"

"Dialectical Materialism"!

Aberdeen Conference

The last SOLIDARITY conference in Aberdeen attracted a small but dedicated bunch of members and sympathisers. There were several Scottish libertarians and contingents from London, Oxford, Manchester and Newcastle. Despite its small size I felt that the conference was one of the better ones I'd attended over the last few years. The conflicts and arguments, of which there were many, were conducted in a forceful but sensitive way. Members of the London editorial group conducted a spirited defence of their issue of the magazine, but in the end their interrogators extracted only limited admissions of sexism.

The open session of the conference on 'Nationalism, Ecology and Decentralisation' ended up being mainly a discussion on nationalism. Nevertheless it was sustained at a high level for over three hours. Perhaps it wasn't such a bad thing that the introductory speaker left his notes in London!

On Saturday night the Aberdeen comrades put on an excellent social with bopping downstairs to reggae/soul/TRB and Inn Bru upstairs to

sustain the polemics.

The Sunday morning session was serious but no breakthrough in the problem of how we relate to each other. On the one hand there were people who claimed positive discrimination for the more inarticulate and traditionally downtrodden (gays and women) - and who seemed to put down those who wouldn't take advantage of the opportunity to be inarticulate and shut up those who were articulate regardless of the fact that they were boring or interesting. On the other hand there were those who wanted to see the clearest exposition and development of ideas and were relatively content with any elitist consequences. Between two such positions it is not necessary to choose, rather it is a question of balance. What emerged in this session was a recognition of the necessity for that balance without any achievement of it.

Nonetheless, it was well worth the three-day train journey and many thanks to the Aberdeen comrades for their organization and hospitality

J.L.



if you wish,
you can make
four legs &
a tail with
the matches
and the
cotton wool.

solidarity

FOR SOCIAL REVOLUTION

No.4 AUGUST SEPTEMBER 1978

15 p

*Thanks for your note
Best wishes
Stefan.*

The Soviet way of death

Czechoslovakia 1968

Male separatism?

Microprocessors



ABOUT OURSELVES

Solidarity for Social Revolution is the national magazine of SOLIDARITY. It is produced approximately every two months. To maximise involvement and democracy the production of the paper rotates among the various autonomous local groups. Issues 1, 2, and 3 were produced by Aberdeen, London and Oxford. This issue was produced in London by a different editorial group from that which was responsible for issue 2. Aberdeen will produce issue 5 - material for publication should be sent to them sooner rather than later.

While the contents of Solidarity for Social Revolution reflect the politics of the group as a whole, articles signed by individuals don't necessarily represent the views of all members. Some of the articles are highly contentious. We welcome readers' replies, whether in the form of articles, letters or graphics.

We want to hear from you. En-

quiries, news and views, articles, subscriptions and literature orders. It will help if you write to the people best able to handle your request.

If you want to contact people in other areas, write to the General Secretary, through Aberdeen group. If you live outside Britain, please contact the International Secretary, through London group.

For enquiries and any correspondence apart from literature orders contact one of the three autonomous Solidarity groups:

Aberdeen group: c/o 167 King Street, Aberdeen.

London group: c/o 123 Lathom Rd., London E. 6.

Oxford group: c/o 34 Cowley Rd., Oxford.

We hope you will subscribe to Solidarity for Social Revolution. Send

your name, address and £2.00 to the Publications Secretary, 23 Solar Ct., Etchingham Park Road, London N.3. (for £10.00 we will send you a bundle of 6 copies of each issue). Make cheques and postal orders payable to 'Solidarity Publications'. You will receive the magazine regularly and any other publications produced nationally up to this value (minus postage).

A wide range of pamphlets is available from the London group (see ads. in this issue) and further ones are being prepared. To obtain a list, to subscribe to future publications of the London group, or to order back issues, write to the London group, c/o 123 Lathom Rd., E.6. Subscriptions still cost £2.00 and cheques and postal orders should be made payable to Solidarity (London). A subscription will ensure you get the national magazine too, unless you specifically opt out.



— as we see it —

1 Throughout the world, the vast majority of people have no control whatsoever over the decisions that most deeply and directly affect their lives. They sell their labour power while others who own or control the means of production accumulate wealth, make the laws and use the whole machinery of the State to perpetuate and reinforce their privileged positions.

2 During the past century the living standards of working people have improved. But neither these improved living standards, nor the nationalisation of the means of production, nor the coming to power of parties claiming to represent the working class have basically altered the status of the worker as worker. Nor have continued p. 19.

as we see it

(from p.2)

they given the bulk of mankind much freedom outside of production. East and West, capitalism remains an inhuman type of society where the vast majority are bossed at work, and manipulated in consumption and leisure. Propaganda and policemen, prisons and schools, traditional values and traditional morality all serve to reinforce the power of the few and to convince or coerce the many into acceptance of a brutal, degrading and irrational system. The 'Communist' world is not communist and the 'Free' world is not free.

3 The trade unions and the traditional parties of the left started in business to change all this. But they have come to terms with the existing patterns of exploitation. In fact they are now essential if exploiting society is to continue working smoothly. The unions act as middlemen in the labour market. The political parties use the struggles and aspirations of the working class for their own ends. The degeneration of working class organisations, itself the result of the failure of the revolutionary movement, has been a major factor in creating working class apathy, which in turn has led to the further degeneration of both parties and unions.

4 The trade unions and political parties cannot be reformed, 'captured', or converted into instruments of working class emancipation. We don't call however for the proclamation of new unions, which in the conditions of today would suffer a similar fate to the old ones. Nor do we call for militants to tear up their union cards. Our aims are simply that the workers themselves should decide on the objectives of their struggles and that the control and organisation of these struggles should remain firmly in their own hands. The forms which this self-activity of the working class may take will vary considerably from country to country and from industry to industry. Its basic content will not.

5 Socialism is not just the common ownership and control of the means of production and distribution. It means equality, real freedom, reciprocal recognition and a radical transformation in all human relations. It is 'man's positive self-consciousness'. It is people's understanding of their environment and of themselves, their domination over their work and over such social institutions as they may need to create. These are not secondary aspects, which will automatically follow the expropriation of the old ruling class. On the contrary they are essential parts of the whole process of social transformation, for without them no genuine social transformation will have taken place.

6 A socialist society can therefore only be built from below. Decisions concerning production and work will be taken by workers' councils composed of elected and revocable delegates. Decisions in other areas will be taken on the basis of the widest possible discussion and consultation among the people as a whole. This democratisation of society down to its very roots is what we mean by 'workers' power'.

Self-managed institutions and collectivities will be the living framework of a free society. There can be no socialism without self-management. Yet a society made up of individual self-managed units is not, of itself, socialist. Such societies could remain oppressive, unequal and unjust. They could be sexist or racist, could restrict access to knowledge or adopt uncritical attitudes towards 'expertise'. We can imagine the individual units of such a society - of whatever size or complexity (from chicken farms to continents) - competing as 'collective

capitalists'. Such competition could only perpetuate alienation and create new inequalities based on new divisions of labour.

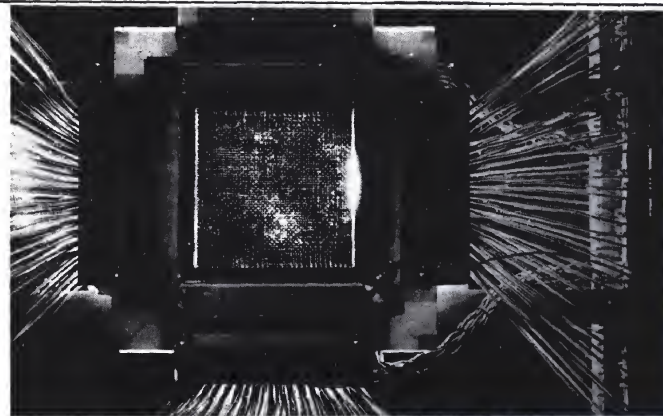
Genuine freedom will only be possible when our lives are no longer the object of economic, cultural and political forces which we experience as external to ourselves, and which constantly tend to regenerate capitalist or authoritarian social relations. A socialist society would therefore abolish not only social classes, hierarchies and other structures of domination, but also wage-labour and production for the purpose of sale or exchange on the market. To fulfill their needs and desires, people would live and work in free cooperation. The national frontiers of armed states would be replaced by a democratic human community, on a world scale. The elimination of competition (and the decay of competitive attitudes) would have profound social effects which we can hardly imagine today.

7 Meaningful action, for revolutionaries, is whatever increases the confidence, the autonomy, the initiative, the participation, the solidarity, the equalitarian tendencies and the self-activity of the masses and whatever assists in their demystification. Sterile and harmful action is whatever reinforces the passivity of the masses, their apathy, their cynicism, their differentiation through hierarchy, their alienation, their reliance on others to do things for them and the degree to which they can therefore be manipulated by others - even by those allegedly acting on their behalf.

8 No ruling class in history has ever relinquished its power without a struggle and our present rulers are unlikely to be an exception. Power will only be taken from them through the conscious, autonomous action of the vast majority of the people themselves. The building of socialism will require mass understanding and mass participation. By their rigid hierarchical structure, by their ideas and by their activities, both social-democratic and bolshevik types of organisations discourage this kind of understanding and prevent this kind of participation. The idea that socialism can somehow be achieved by an elite party (however 'revolutionary') acting 'on behalf of' the working class is both absurd and reactionary.

9 We do not accept the view that by itself the working class can only achieve a trade union consciousness. On the contrary we believe that its conditions of life and its experiences in production constantly drive the working class to adopt priorities and values and to find methods of organisation which challenge the established social order and established pattern of thought. These responses are implicitly socialist. On the other hand, the working class is fragmented, dispossessed of the means of communication, and its various sections are at different levels of awareness and consciousness. The task of the revolutionary organisation is to help give proletarian consciousness an explicitly socialist content, to give practical assistance to workers in struggle, and to help those in different areas to exchange experiences and link up with one another.

10 We do not see ourselves as yet another leadership, but merely as an instrument of working class action. The function of SOLIDARITY is to help all those who are in conflict with the present authoritarian social structure, both in industry and in society at large, to generalise their experience, to make a total critique of their condition and of its causes, and to develop the mass revolutionary consciousness necessary if society is to be totally transformed.



INFORMATION-STORING "BRAIN" OF UNIVAC COMPUTER

There has been a lot of speculation in the fringe scientific press about the social effects of recent advances in computer miniaturisation. This has leaked through the media at large. The implications however have not been taken up to the extent they deserve. It may well be that the implications are precisely why the matter has not been dealt with more fully. One possible result, to put it at its most reckless, is the abolition of the working class.

under way. ICI, for example, estimate that they need to lose 4% of their labour force every year to remain competitive. The result of these combined tendencies has been the loss of one to one and a half million jobs in manufacturing over the last ten years.

But service and routine administrative jobs which have tended to soak up jobs lost in manufacturing - office jobs have increased from 8.5 to 10 million

THE MINIATURISATION

Microprocessors - miniature computers based on tiny silicon chips - have developed to a point where sophisticated computer control is cheaper and faster than human supervision. A friend of mine who attended an IBM seminar on the subject quoted them saying that microprocessors had become cheaper than human beings two and a half years ago. And the Chairman of one firm that makes microprocessors predicts that by 1986 prices will have dropped to one twentieth of today's.

The range of applications is vast. 'The so-called "computer on a chip" can be incorporated into a whole host of machines and appliances to turn them into "smart machines" - that is, machines which add powers of memory, arithmetic and decision-making to their orthodox functions - whether it be cooking or cutting bits of metal'. (*Datalink*, 6/2/78). Given an unbridled development of this technology it is clear that every job involving repetitive tasks could be automated. As far as manufacturing is concerned there has been for some time a flight to the cheaper wage areas of the world, areas with more authoritarian, more corrupt and less environmentally fussy governments. For those industries which stay in the UK, automation is already steadily

in the past 15 years (*Guardian*, 6/6/78) - are now themselves threatened with an almost cataclysmic decline. IBM has designed a 'paperless office' where computers talk to each other via optical fibres and satellites. Microfilming and databanks along the line of the new Post Office facilities already promise to relegate filing clerks to the historic status of hand-loom weavers. In supermarkets computerised price-coding already enables the cashing-up of goods to double-up as stock control.

The sort of jobs that seem safe for now are those like the site-fixing side of building (all the bits could be manufactured without touching human hands, though), medicine (although lab testing and diagnosis are already candidates for automation), garage mechanics and van drivers - and of course computer operators. But the number of jobs that stand to be swept away if the introduction of microprocessors goes ahead is of such an order of magnitude (despite the number of jobs that the new technology produces) that there just aren't going to be enough van driving jobs to go round. Put simply we can say that the logic of the full potential of microprocessors is unemployment on a massive scale. This unemployment would be permanent and

would not represent a reserve army of labour. The relation between the unemployed and production would be that of a Third World shanty town clustered round an oil refinery - i.e. excluded and useless.

PREDICTIONS AND REACTIONS

There have been some pretty hairy predictions. If economic growth does not rise above 2% (the average for the UK since 1950) the Institute of Manpower Studies estimates that there will be 6½ - 7 million unemployed by 1990. This takes no note of the effects of micro-processors. An ASTMS report on their effects predicts 'five million unemployed in this country by the mid-1990s even if the government takes every possible step to expand the economy'. (*Guardian*, May 12, 1978). Put these two reports together and it does not seem too much to talk of the potential marginalisation of the working class.

But while such developments might be welcomed by management on the level of the individual enterprise, the state which would have to sort out the general consequences of these develop-

ments would not be so happy. Various stirring calls have been made to increase investment. As far as manufacturing goes this might increase competitiveness but it will also accelerate job loss through automation. (Some trade unions seem to be calling for massive investment and also fighting against the introduction of any new plant.) The state is desperate to prevent any threat to the cycle of work and consumption. While the system needs people to work, rewards (in the shape of higher consumption) must be linked to the work. Any groups outside this work/reward lifestyle have to be worse off. Yet if the numbers out of work are growing - and seem set to keep on growing - then clearly you're in trouble. Either you buy them off and risk the collapse of the work ethic. Or you don't, and risk an embittered break in the consensus and civil disorder. The short-term solution arrived at seems to be the provision of jobs regardless of point or purpose.

On one level government policy will involve a certain amount of support of the 'commanding depths' of the economy (i.e. the lame ducks), if only to prevent any disorderly increase in unemployment by sudden closures. The managed phasing out of jobs in the

older industries has become something that the government has got very good at. One can also expect further rises in school leaving age, suggestions for 1 year in ten off work, suggestions for earlier retirement, pressure to cut out overtime, all designed to reduce the numbers of unemployed.

BOONDOGGING



Actually this factory produces nothing. It is just a device to employ labour.

More central to our concerns and more important for the future is the government's preoccupation with 'job creation'. The thinking behind this has its origins in various interventions

But Schnelllauf is no ordinary firm. In fact, strictly speaking, like some 160 similar concerns in West Germany it is not a company at all.

Run with all the seriousness and competitiveness of normal business these mock firms trade with each other as though it were the real thing. They keep detailed accounts, have a specific nominal capital and are responsible to imaginary shareholders.

Their operations however are purely theoretical. Their main purpose is to provide practical training for the jobless. Staff have to clock in and out, and are reprimanded by their boss for arriving late or for shoddy work...

The business about providing 'practical training for the jobless' is rather put in its place by the last paragraph:

'With more than one million people unemployed in West Germany and little prospect of the number dropping, the importance of these mock firms may well increase.' (*Guardian*, January 24, 1978.)

With so many trained people unemployed, why train more, eh? No,

what we have here is magnificent. A complete world of useless work! A daily unreality! A hallucination of busyness! Yet the question that should be asked is how different this is from our 'normal' working life? After all, Paul Goodman was writing the following in the late 1950s:

'Suppose we would cut out the boondoggling and gear our society to a more sensible abundance, with efficient production of quality goods, distribution in a natural market, counter-inflation and sober credit. At once the work week would be cut to, say, 20 hours instead of 40... Or alternatively, half the labour force would be unemployed. Suppose too - and how can we not suppose it? - that the automatic machines are used generally, rather than just to get rid of badly organised unskilled labour. The unemployment will be still more drastic...

Everybody knows this, nobody wants to talk about it much, for we don't know how to cope with it. The effect is that we are living a kind of lie. Long ago, labour leaders used to fight for the shorter work week. But now they don't, because they're pretty sure they don't want it. Indeed when hours are reduced

OF THE PROLETARIAT

by states in their economic affairs, in the thirties. Paul Goodman tells us that 'when the New Deal attempted by hook or by crook to put people back to work and give them money to revive the shattered economy there was an outcry of moral indignation from the conservatives that many of the jobs were "boondoggling", useless made-work'. The Manpower Services Commission has been born to boondoggle. A year ago it had created 70,000 jobs and has as its aim the eventual provision of 115,000 'short term jobs of social value'. The Manpower Services Commission, with its tens of thousands of Civil Servants looking for ways to make work for others, is itself a boondoggle supreme. There is little doubt that the increase in the numbers of Civil Servants in recent years is deliberate boondoggle. But for sheer class, take the following example:

'Schnelllauf Plastik (Quick Plastic Sales) seems at first sight like any other company. The office rings to the clatter of typewriters, an employee feeds data into a computer. Over in the boardroom a heated debate breaks out as executives pore over the details of a new contract.



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THE CONTINUED MINIATURISATION OF THE PROLETARIAT

the tendency is to get a second, part-time job and raise the standard of living because the job is meaningless and one must have something; but the standard of living is pretty meaningless, too. Nor is this strange atmosphere a new thing. For at least a generation (i.e. since approximately 1940 - JMQ) sensible use of our productivity could have thrown a vast population out of work, or relieved everybody of a lot of useless work depending on how you take it. (Consider with how little cutback of useful civilian production the economy produced the war goods and maintained an Army, economically unemployed.) The plain truth is that at present very many of us are useless, not needed, rationally unemployable... It looks busy and expansive but it is rationally at a stalemate'. (*Growing up Absurd*, pp. 37-38.)

If Paul Goodman is to be believed, then, boondoggling has been a way of life in the West - or at least in America - for some 40 years. But microprocessors have changed the scene. Automation that was technically possible was not economically compelling, while now automation is cheaper than human beings and getting cheaper all the time. It is worth asking whether a real socio-economic break is imminent, for we are dealing with some very juicy contradictions.

The 'real' economy, both manufacture and administration, is being driven by international competition into more and more automation. Governments are being driven by political pressures to provide nonsense jobs for those out of work. The ability of governments to provide this nonsense work depends very much on the profitability of an increasingly automated economy which can provide revenue from tax. Thus the state too, in its economic role, will automate away with



the best of them. And, through its political role, it will have to cope with the social consequences of its own actions. For example the National Enterprise Board has just announced a £50 million investment to develop the next generation of silicon chips.

It seems clear that this situation cannot be anything but unstable. It has been stated by no less a person than the Chairman of the Supplementary Benefits Commission that 'we are on the way to a world in which about a tenth of our workers can produce all the material goods we need'. (*Observer*, February 19, 1978.) At some point on our way to that world the conventional wisdom which now demands work, no matter how useless, for the unemployed 'because it costs as much to keep a person unemployed' will start to demand well paid unemployment 'because it costs as much to give them work'.

ALTERNATIVES

At this point we are on familiar territory for libertarians. This demand for comfortable unemployment would mark the end of the work ethic. It would mark the end of loathsome, boring toil. The situation that Kropotkin prophesied and Bookchin described as built in has arrived: technology has liberated us from work. But there has been an unfortunate tendency among socialists of all varieties to believe that somehow the system will get to socialism by itself, either by some evolutionary process or as a result of inevitable breakdown through internal contradictions. But it ain't necessarily so! While an end to loathsome, boring toil has been by socialists as a realisable goal under socialism, the fact that the system has reached that point by itself does not necessarily mean either that it has evolved into socialism or that it is about to break down in revolutionary crisis. The essence of socialism is the democratisation of society to its roots, with massive popular control over the decisions that most affect our

lives. It is possible to argue that, other things remaining as they are, the removal of the necessity to work for the majority of the population, even if they themselves demand it and enforce that demand, would take us further from socialism rather than nearer.

I say this because effectively a comfortable self-exclusion from economic or even useful life amounts, in the long term, to the same thing as being excluded from these things by others. It is again the Third World shanty town round the oil refinery. For the fact of the matter is that while work remains it will be 'real' and boondoggle mixed. In the most extreme cases, it will be needed by the system, even if only to justify the existence of a high bureaucrat. To be needed, to have the power to disrupt by withdrawal of labour, is to have a measure of control over the system, negative perhaps but effective. Once that is gone, the only pressure the excluded nine-tenths of the population would be able to exert would be consumer boycotts and riots in the townships.

CREATIVE RESISTANCE

It might well be that a labour-intensive whole food-windmill-geodesic dome-stripped pine beds type of 'outside' economy might develop under such circumstances - obviously stemming from the economic fringes of our own society. It might well be that this outside economy might eventually challenge the 'real' one. But unless certain other developments took place it would be condemned to parasitism for a very long time.

All this prediction business is self-evidently tricky. Our scenario up to this point (automation leading to increasing nonsense-work, leading to an anti-work ideological break) depends



on a rather low level of popular opposition to automation and the present organisation of work. But opposing forces are possible and there are different strands to follow. Institutions and individuals whose attitude to work is based on compulsive neurosis and the fear of freedom (from something which bores and disgusts them) can be expected to oppose automation quite as much as someone who believes in human dignity through the exercise of hard won skills. The compulsive neurotics would be prepared to accept nonsense-work with depressed and depressing alacrity. Skill freaks would not. From both, however, we could expect a kind of new Luddism if opposition to automation were to grow. As to the opposition to the present organisation of work, there are two sides to this (at least). The first is the growth in numbers of small cooperatives. The other is initiatives of the Lucas Aerospace kind, where not

were. These are susceptible to face-to-face democracy of cooperatives and would make a most interesting social mix with the muesli brigade.

As far as Lucas Aerospace style initiatives are concerned, the problem is - again - capital. A set of suggestions as to how things should be produced which undermines hierarchy and managerial elitism is likely to be looked at most leery by institutions who are in a position to lend money, but which are based on those self-same principles. In resisting such proposals the management of Lucas Aerospace and the government both reacted true to type. The latest news is that the EEC - with a longer tradition of 'trade union co-determination' but less experience of British rank-and-file militancy - is considering financing some such development. The only alternative to outside funding in the short term is some kind of insurrectionary seizure of Lucas

TGWU CHINESE BANDITS SECTION

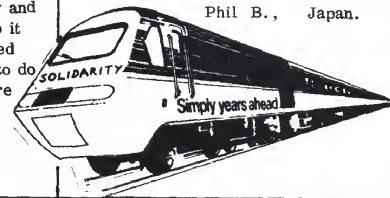
Just received 'Mutinies 1917-1920'. Where did you dig up the material for a fascinating pamphlet like that? I noticed in one of the footnotes that you referred to an article in *Liberio International* no. 3 which dealt with the Chinese wartime labourers who went back to China and formed syndicalist unions in Shanghai and Canton.

You might be interested to know that not all the 'coolies' who came back from Europe got involved with workplace organising - most of them had no place to work. Many seem to have done what was more or less a last resort in China then: they became bandits.

In September 1923 the crack 'Blue Express' from Shanghai to Peking was derailed and several foreign captives taken and held for ransom. The negotiations lasted several months. The 'Lincheng Affair', as it was known, became a cause célèbre (it later inspired the 1931 Greta Garbo film 'Shanghai Express', directed by Frank Capra). Most of the media treated it as 'just another bandit outrage'. But I came across evidence that there was a political faction within the gang, several of whom spoke French. This group held out for a political solution to the affair, demanding the resignations of rapacious local warlords, etc.

I don't know how far the attack on foreigners was premeditated. One of the passengers was actually the niece of John D. Rockefeller, Lucy Aldrich, but the gang seem not to have known, for they released the women captives almost immediately. That would seem to suggest that there were no political contacts in Shanghai. Eventually most of the gang were enrolled in the government Army, in accordance with one of their demands. A few months later, when the fuss had died down, they were quietly bumped off - I guess in retaliation for the loss of 'face' that many of the local commanders had suffered.

Phil B., Japan.



JMQ.

only what is made but the social organisation of how it is made is now the subject of contestation.

There are snags in both cases. A desperate shortage of capital often drives cooperatives into accepting loans off government bodies (like Job Creation, CoSIRA, the Council for Support of Industry in Rural Areas, etc.). These come with organisational strings attached and limit freedom of action through the huge debts involved. Another difficulty may well be that the market for things produced by cooperatives exists only in the area of small batch production, because once a mass market exists large automated machines can produce stuff cheaper and faster. There are more positive possibilities, though. For instance one area of growth in the future will be small groups of innovators, researchers or inventors - ideas as products as it

Aerospace's assets which, though interesting, would face incredible difficulties in the way of developing, producing and marketing its socially useful products. Yet despite the difficulties and pressures faced by the Lucas Aerospace Shop Stewards Combine, the ideas it puts forward have huge potential. In asserting a) popular rather than managerial control of technological innovation, and b) the necessity for socially useful and responsible products, they have perhaps provided the strongest basis for contestation of the present direction and control of automation. One does not wish to wax apocalyptic but if we are to try and control automation we had better do it before nine-tenths of us are excluded from ever again having the chance to do so. Oh! yes, one more thing, there are now less than 6 years to 1984.

thought - she cannot bear the idea that women are bound by our biology,

But Liz seems to blame feminists for the situation which we are.

We must learn to listen to

Jargon generator

A

1. IN PARTICULAR
2. ON THE OTHER HAND
3. HOWEVER
4. SIMILARLY
5. AS A RESULTANT IMPLICATION
6. IN THIS REGARD
7. BASED ON INTEGRAL SUBSYSTEM CONSIDERATIONS
8. FOR EXAMPLE
9. THUS
0. IN RESPECT TO SPECIFIC GOALS

B

1. A LARGE PORTION OF THE INTERFACE COORDINATION COMMUNICATION
2. A CONSTANT FLOW OF EFFECTIVE INFORMATION
3. THE CHARACTERISATION OF SPECIFIC CRITERIA
4. INITIATION OF CRITICAL SUBSYSTEM DEVELOPMENT
5. THE FULLY INTEGRATED TEST PROGRAMME
6. THE PRODUCT OF CONFIGURATION BASELINK
7. ANY ASSOCIATION SUPPORTING ELEMENT
8. THE INCORPORATION OF ADDITIONAL MISSION CONSTRAINTS
9. THE INDEPENDENT FUNCTIONAL PRINCIPLE
0. A PRIMARY INTERRELATIONSHIP BETWEEN SYSTEM AND/OR SUBSYSTEM TECHNOLOGIES

C

1. MUST UTILISE AND BE FUNCTIONALLY INTERWOVEN WITH
2. MAXIMISES THE PROBABILITY OF PROJECT SUCCESS AND MINIMISES THE COST AND TIME REQUIRED FOR
3. ADDS EXPLICIT PERFORMANCE LIMITS TO
4. NECESSITATES THAT URGENT CONSIDERATION BE APPLIED TO
5. REQUIRED CONSIDERABLE SYSTEMS ANALYSIS AND TRADE OFF STUDIES TO ARRIVE AT
6. IS FURTHER COMPOUNDED WHEN TAKING INTO ACCOUNT
7. PRESENTS EXTREMELY INTERESTING CHALLENGES TO
8. RECOGNISES THE IMPORTANCE OF OTHER SYSTEMS AND THE NECESSITY FOR
9. EFFECTS A SIGNIFICANT IMPLEMENTATION OF
0. ADDS OVERRIDING PERFORMANCE CONSTRAINING TO

Jargon generator

D

1. THE SOPHISTICATED HARDWARE
2. THE ANTICIPATED FOURTH GENERATION EQUIPMENT
3. THE SUBSYSTEM COMPATIBILITY TESTING
4. THE STRUCTURAL DESIGN, BASED ON SYSTEM ENGINEERING CONCEPTS
5. THE PRELIMINARY QUALIFICATION LIMIT
6. THE EVOLUTION OF SPECIFICATIONS OVER A GIVEN TIME PERIOD
7. THE PHILOSOPHY OF COMMONALITY AND STANDARDISATION
8. THE GREATER FIGHT-WORTHINESS CONCEPT
9. ANY DISCREET CONFIGURATION MODE
0. THE TOTAL SYSTEM RATIONALE

The following useful tool for producing brain-baffling bullshit has been around in Xerox samizdat form for some time, originating from Camden Council of Social Service. It can provide you with over 40,000 ways of saying nothing at length in the now-situation vocabulary of tomorrow.

Select one phrase from each of the columns A, B, C, D and write out in full without added punctuation. Further sentences may be formed by taking phrases from the columns in the order DACB, BACD, or ADCB.

You can personalise messages to your local DHSS office, University Sociology Department, etc., by arranging your message according to their telephone number. The jargon generator can also be used to set examinations questions by forming phrases in order BCD or DCB and adding the word 'Discuss'.

And political. Until women can wrest control of their bodies, and hence of

thing - in the change our le and to regain Some of us be women and me different, and from the end o tioning which f roles; others l lies in our po that we must fi this power. D ches we are w a 'positive self women' - this of all destroy t culine and femi

Again, I agree on the is men - many do the well-worn s the persecution fierce man-hate in attempts to s autonomous org of thing' proving depravity of fem

I coordin Feminist newsl

COI

Dear Friends,

I enclose bolster my dwi another £2's wo help a little towa very valid maga about 'the good c but deal with rel relevant way (un papers which I u though I wish the don't go on about glorious about de illas - a form of Most of all, I thin refreshingly free

solidarity

FOR SOCIAL REVOLUTION

No.5 Late September/October 1978

15p

**GENETIC
MANIPULATION**

**CONTRACEPTIVE
HAZARDS**



**RAF members' re-assessment
Italian feminists · Peugeot exposed
Red Therapy – can politics be fun?**

CHRYSLER WORKERS BEWARE!

The impending takeover of Chrysler's U.K. operations by the French Peugeot-Citroen combine will mean a different kind of management altogether for Chrysler's workers: one which regularly uses an internal spy system, "persuades" workers to join a pro-management trade union and uses hired thugs to "keep the workers in line".

The history and structure of Peugeot are described in the latest SOLIDARITY MOTOR BULLETIN, just out. With the regime described above in force, it is not surprising that productivity is 50% greater again than at U.K. Chrysler (12.0 vehicles per worker annually as against 8.2). This is reflected in the profit figures - Peugeot, £169m in 1976 and still increasing; U.K. Chrysler, a £532,000 loss in six months this year. However, the Bulletin does not concentrate on what is usually called "economics", but on the way the Peugeot management ensures minimum disruption to production on the line.

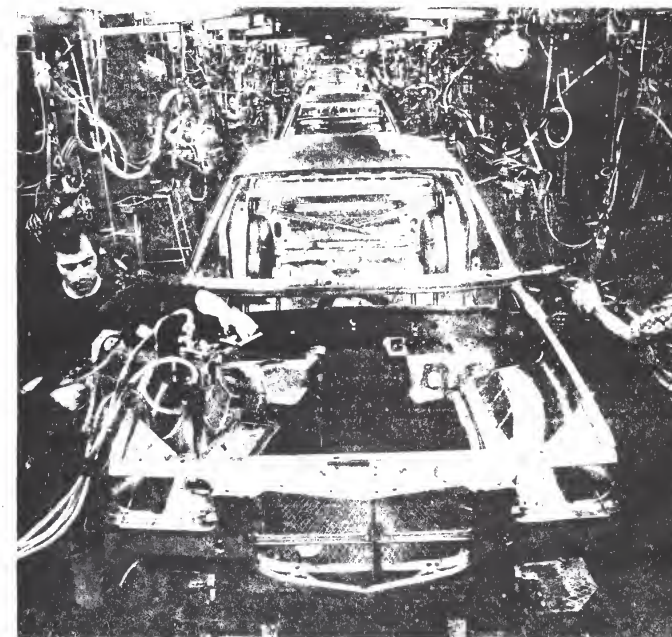
Since 1968, the year of revolt, Peugeot have been hypersensitive to the tendency of workers in advanced technological production to resort to all means of controlling the speed of the line and others ways of contesting the powers of the "order-givers".

In 1968, despite a strong legacy of paternalism and the fact that the company supplies housing and social facilities in one giant industrial prison - 42,000 people are employed in the area of Sochaux in eastern France - Peugeot was occupied.

In this case the French riot police (CRS) won a "victory". They attacked the occupation at three in the morning and the ensuing battle left three workers dead.

Another important strike in 1969 by a group of workers in a strategic position (spray-painters) forced a total shutdown and won concessions on sickness benefits.

Determined that this was not going to be the pattern of future "industrial relations", the Peugeot firm have installed a system of employing a force of mercenaries (mostly from past Algerian campaigns) whose function is to inform on people not submitting to the dictates of productivity. In



exceptional circumstances they are used to physically intimidate and break up strikes.

This has not worked totally, however, and small-scale strikes still erupt. Also important, these thugs are also partially a law unto themselves and indulge in criminal activities in the wider community. There have been instances where they have disrupted production themselves, in order to fabricate dissent.

In all this the trade unions are less of a force than is the case in Britain. It could be argued that it is the failure of the unions to occupy a strategic position vis-a-vis bargaining with the employers that necessitates a more overt way of control by management.

There is a Catch-22 situation in this instance. It is precisely the fact that the "old-fashioned"

ideas of the Peugeot management tradition (in common with other French firms) that has helped create a minority role for unions such as the C.G.T. In contrast with the closed shop in Britain and in other countries where car plants operate, the possibility of dissent taking "explosive" forms has persuaded Peugeot to adopt a repressive policy towards anybody, and especially known "activists", who challenge their control over production.

This article first appeared in GLASGOW PEOPLES PRESS, to whom thanks.

****SOLIDARITY MOTOR BULLETIN no.8**
"Chrysler Workers Beware: Peugeot destroys all known activists".

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solidarity

FOR SOCIAL REVOLUTION

No. 6

DEC. - JAN. 78 - 79

15p

DRIVING ON THE LEFT obey signals by authorised persons



UNITY
PROPOSAL



UNITY
DISCUSSION



UNITY
CONSUMMATED



TO OFFICIAL
AHEAD



WAY AHEAD
CONFERENCE



LOOK OUT FOR
PROTEST DEMO
PROCEEDING IN
WRONG DIRECTION



EVIL KNEEVIL
LEAPING THE
HISTORICAL
STAGES



TACTICAL
ZIG-ZAG TO
PRESERVE
PARTY PURITY



BROAD FRONT
CAUGHT IN
CONSTITUTIONAL
CHANNELS



OBLIVIOUS MARXIST
GROUP CONVINCED
OF HISTORICAL
DESTINY



HISTORIC MERGER
AHEAD! WOMEN
TO JOIN MALE
DOMINATED GROUP



WOMEN JOIN
MALE DOMINATED
GROUP



UMBRELLA
ORGANISATION
IN TROUBLE



LENINIST GROUP
WITH NO WOMAN
ON CENTRAL
COMMITTEE



LENINIST GROUP
WITH TOKEN
WOMAN ON
CENTRAL COMMITTEE



ALTERNATIVE
SOCIALIST



OPPORTUNIST
SOCIALIST



CONFUSED
SOCIALIST



LEFT WING
DEVIATIONIST



LEFT WING
DEVIATIONIST
ELIMINATED

beware signals from unauthorised persons

Economic crisis?; Unresolved enigma;
Sexual revolution betrayed;
Revolutionary myopia; Ford Spain

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FOR SOCIAL REVOLUTION

No.7 March / April 1979

15p

INCLUDING

SPECIAL SUPPLEMENT

We have ways
of making you



.work till
you drop



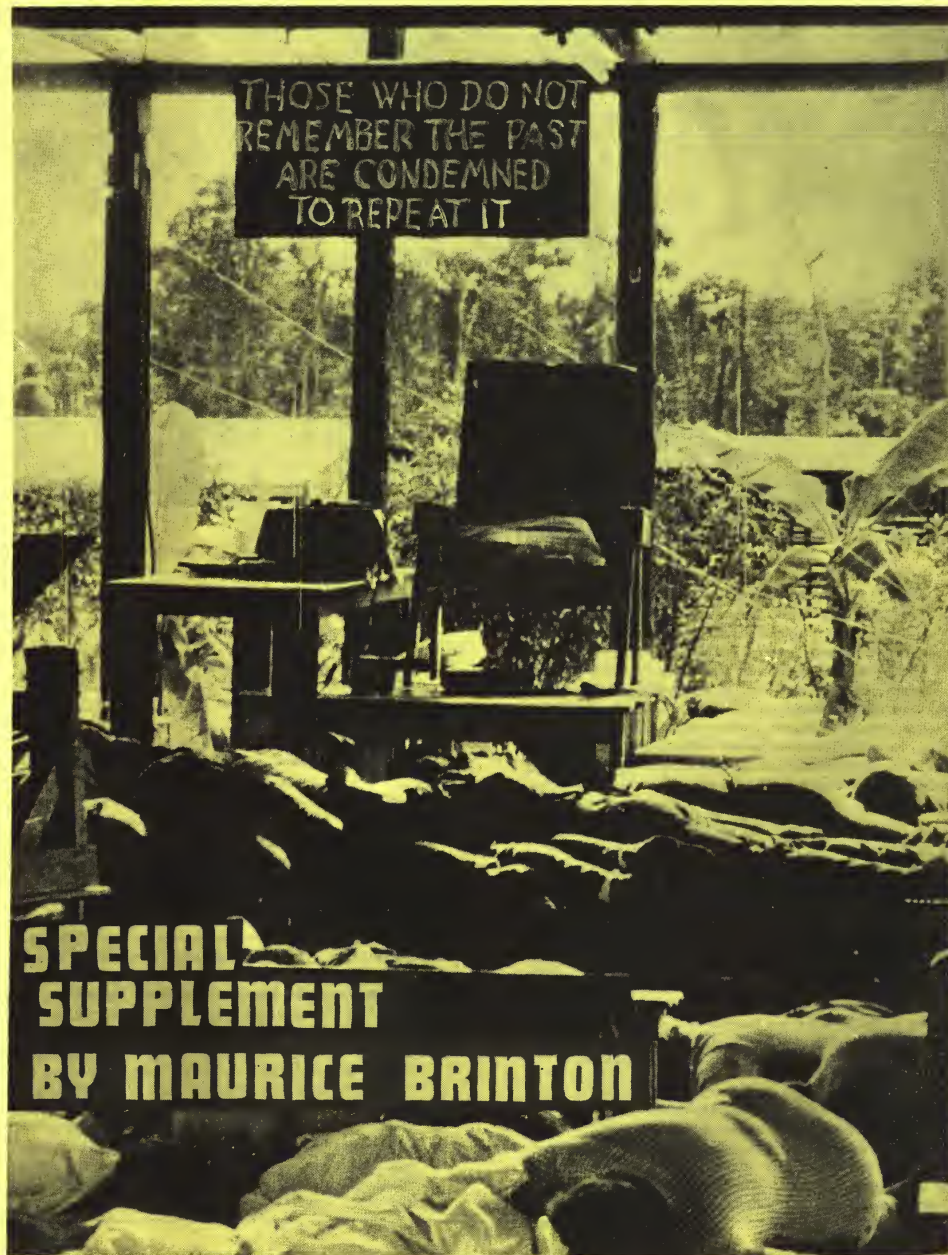
.commit
mass suicide



. confess

for 'socialism'

SUICIDE FOR SOCIALISM?



**SPECIAL
SUPPLEMENT
BY MAURICE BRINTON**

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FOR SOCIAL REVOLUTION

No 8 may-june '79

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FOR SOCIAL REVOLUTION

no.9 august-september 1979.

15p

Culture

Sunny Bogness '79

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wholemeal flours and
bread, beans, fruit, nuts,
herbs, spices, soap,
seaweed, books.....

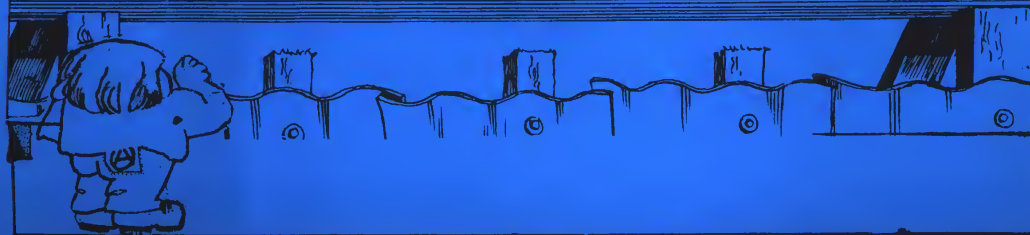


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**Bring Yourself, Your Children,
And Your Ideas**



AUTONOMY & POLITICS

As a "Solidarity" member not involved in low pay disputes or other struggles at the point of production, I'd like to highlight the issues affecting an autonomous movement amongst people claiming benefits.

Cardan's analysis of modern capitalism is projected in terms of a Model whereby production and consumption have been bureaucratised/ rationalised to the point where there is a high degree of regulation which eliminates the cyclical crisis pattern pre-World War II. Within this Model, only strictly applicable to the advanced, western bloc, the affluent working class is the rule rather than the exception.

However, "the exception" still exists - people who either through choice (the revolt against work - or against paying tax) or circumstance are unemployed or unemployable. Whether it is a reflection of the relative position of Britain or not, successive Governments have differed little in their commitment to enforce economic sanctions against those not in wage labour. A whole ideology of scroungers/workshy etc. (however anachronistic to liberal reformers) still persists and is perpetuated daily through the media and in the treatment of those claiming benefit - especially Supplementary Benefit.

Privatisation is the lot of claimants as with other groups in contemporary class society. Any political action among claimants comes up against the hard facts that many accept, or at least pay lip service to the scrounger ideology. While this is probably being broken down, it is still a significant obstacle to collective action. An offshoot of this is the productivist emphasis of the Trad. Left with their various Right to Work campaigns which cannot see beyond herding people back into the production process and demanding "Full employment".

However, the actual situation is more complicated. It would be false to see the movement in monolithic terms, just as it's difficult to gauge how claimants unions operate throughout Britain and Northern Ireland. Therefore, to a great extent my analysis is based on

the Glasgow situation where there has been a slow but significant upsurge in self-organisation. Especially in the schemes (housing estates) where there are vast numbers on the dole or the order book a potential exists: often against a background of a hostile environment whereby mobs terrorise their fellow residents.

Against this is an alternative conception towards "organising the unemployed" has developed. On the face of it the Claimants Union movement offers a great deal of encouragement for



libertarians: autonomous groups organising around issues which affect people's everyday of their lives; a movement without formal or centralised leadership which calls for: "a socialist society in which all necessities are provided free and which is managed and controlled directly by the people".⁽¹⁾

Active involvement in a claimants union is nowhere substantial and people don't often go beyond a narrow self-interest or an ideological division between "deserving" and "undeserving". Even where there is first hand experience of assertive behaviour against a D.H.S.S. office there is still an apparent reluctance to "put something back into the union". To a degree this may be because a C.U. is seen as somebody's property (although this is common in all forms of organisation, "Solidarity" included) or dominated by an "in-crowd".

In fairly crude terms there are three basic approaches towards the political significance of "the movement". There is entrenched in C.U. attitudes a non-political stance which rejects "outside" manipulation or incorporation by Trots and such like. However, this has been extended by many into an ANTI-POLITICAL position which rejects a critique vis a vis the claimants position in society and sees claimants unions as voluntary self-help welfare rights groups, where conflict is an aberration. On the other hand, there is the standard RADICAL position as articulated in most C.U. literature which puts forward transitional demands of social reform: "an adequate income without means test for all people".⁽²⁾

There is a degree of affinity with people in the POVERTY INDUSTRY such as radical social workers, welfare rights officers, Civil Servants Against the Nazis (the CPSA is the major Trade Union for DHSS staff).

Specific demands such as the scrapping of the Industrial Misconduct Rule and the Co-habitation rule are raised in the light of calling for a total re-assessment of welfare benefits and the "poverty trap". Here the RECUPERATION game is being played, but the ideology is not that of the Trots (too workerist) but of libertarian marxism. This is especially clear among the "in-crowd" who go to Conferences, speak to the Supplementary Benefits Commission, lobby TUC Conferences, etc.. With a Tory Government, however, it is even less likely that their demands will be listened to, however reasonable or liberal.

Taking an offensive position of CONTESTATION are a minority without much sense of cohesion or coherence. There is a more explicit attack on the work ethic and on the structural position of the bureaucracy but there is an unwillingness as with the anarchists to grapple with the real dynamics of modern capitalism and whether a mass movement is even necessary or desirable.

One danger common to all approaches is to confuse "the movement" as an end in itself: "our prime commitment is to the social revolution - not to any particular political group". (3)

"Building" the C.U. movement has to be seen as secondary to the means (self-management of the struggle) and awareness of whose interests demands are taken up:

THAT'S THE IDEA PEOPLE! ORGANISE TO TAKE BACK THE CONTROL OF YOUR OWN LIVES FROM THE BUREAUCRATS AND DOSSERS!



"the enemies of our enemies are not necessarily our friends". (4)

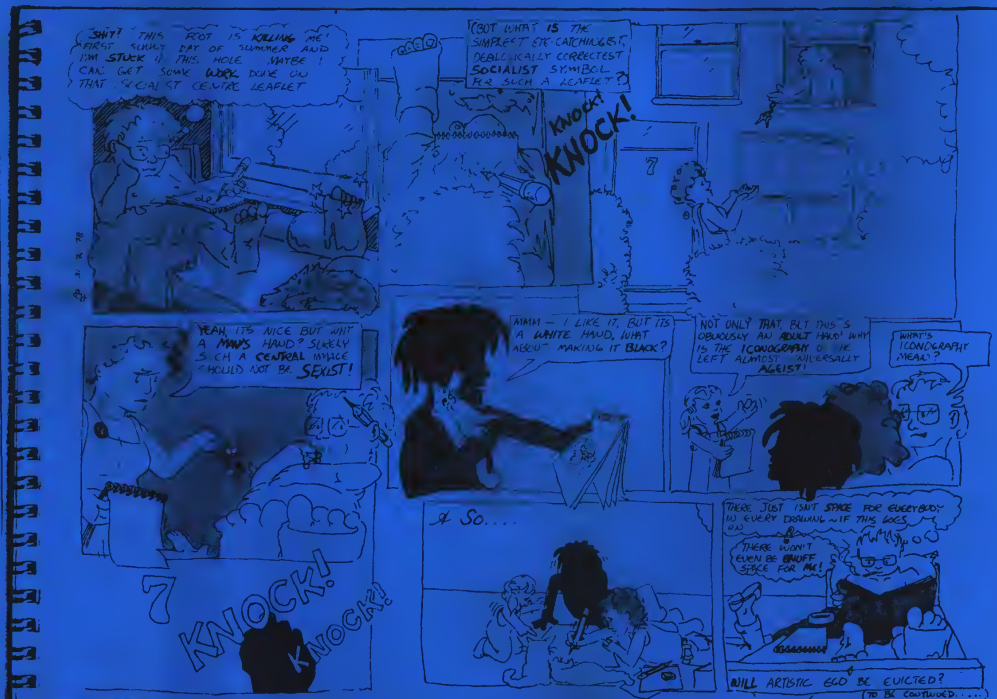
For example, on the question of talking to the so-called radicals of the CPUSA, there is articulated the position that implementing the Good Work Strike would benefit claimants rather than withdrawing labour or a work to rule. Allied to this is the fact that the CPUSA work under the Official Secrets Act, putting into operation the various "Secret Codes" which intimidate claimants

in their personal lives and prevent claims. To daily reproduce this system yet espouse "socialist" causes is a double-standard common to "the Left" and an offensive position doesn't shrink from attacking radical rhetoric.

Against all the immovable objects of bureaucracy (however enlightened) the revolutionary approach is not to raise demands but to articulate, service and generalise social struggles. Claimants aren't only involved in struggles as claimants and issues such as housing, community resources etc. can only suffer if they are compartmentalised. As the situationists saw it, the critique of separation is a crucial aspect of the revolution of everyday life.

K. M. (Glasgow),

- (1) and (2) C.U. minimum Charter, pts 1 & 2
- (3) and (4) As We Don't See It "Solidarity".



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TORNNESS AND THE ANTI-NUCLEAR MOVEMENT

The occupation in May of the nuclear power station construction site at Torness near Edinburgh highlighted major questions for the anti-nuclear movement in Britain. Several hundred people carried out direct action involving the occupation of the contractors machinery compound and damage to property, and machines, in defiance not only of the police but of the informal leadership of the Torness Alliance. The 'respectable' Alliance leadership joined with the police and the mass media in hysterical condemnations of 'wreckers'. A small group of Solidarity members who were involved in the occupation write here about what happened at Torness and what it means for future anti-nuclear activity.

WHAT HAPPENED AT TORNNESS?

In the evening (Sat. 5th May) people met in their Regions to discuss strategy for the occupation, brought forward by popular demand, to Sunday morning and later on for a mass meeting. Without microphones or a suitable meeting place, chaos was the predictable result. Then, instead of the mass assembly, a meeting of 'spokespeople' elected from affinity groups met.

This meeting decided that the fence would be cut to gain access to the site only if it was impossible to occupy without damage (a real non-question since people had already removed large sections of fencing). There was also a reaffirmation of the general 'No damage to property' ruling. It is debateable whether this spokespeople's meeting actually represented the majority feeling of occupiers on this issue. And whether it did or not, there is no good reason why, on this issue, there should be only one policy, to which everyone has to adhere.

On site, the police and security guards protected the machinery compound and the office building at the main gate, and left the outer site unguarded. Useful work was done uprooting surveying poles, diverting a stream to cause flooding, and making some imaginative slogans for passers-by on the A1.

The 'organisers' called a mass

TORNNESS keeping it clean

meeting - at a point well away from the machinery compound. As this was about to start people ran up to report that demonstrators had broken into the machinery compound, but that the police were trying to stop them and had arrested two people. Those of us in Solidarity were among the many who wanted everyone to make immediately for the compound, to ensure its successful occupation. The reformist Alliance 'leaders' and some pacifists argued that there must be a lengthy discussion on the issue. Around two hundred people headed for the compound and left them to it.

At the machinery compound, a large section of the fence was down but the police were standing in a line in front of the machinery, ordering people to go no further but it soon became obvious that they were too few to prevent the demonstrators taking control of the compound.

Once inside the compound we felt the most productive activity was whatever did most to disrupt and hinder the building of the power station. Small groups and individuals, flitting in and out of the ranks of earth moving equipment, did as much damage to the machinery as they could. Some people however, in the middle of the machinery compound, held a meeting to argue the pros and cons of damaging the equipment which was all around them. Sundry 'leftists' got up and denounced damage to machinery, including a spokesperson for the Socialist Workers Party (the SWP appear to be confused over the issue: some SWP'ers have since denied that they oppose sabotage).

Nevertheless we felt the machinery compound occupation on the whole was a positive event and we were glad when we saw hundreds more demonstrators coming towards the compound. Re-inforcements,

not exactly. These 'comrades' lined up outside the compound and started chanting 'Out, out out!!' Those of us inside largely ignored them.

Some time later, with it starting to rain and numbers dwindling, the compound occupiers met to discuss what to do next. Unfortunately most people there didn't realise that police reinforcements had arrived to re-take the compound, and that the informal leadership of the Torness Alliance had made a deal with them, involving the police holding back while the Alliance 'leaders' adopted the 'new non-violent tactic' of acting as alternative police officers and trying to persuade us 'wreckers' to leave.

In retrospect, (knowing now what exactly was going on) we feel the best decision might have been to stay put in the compound. Certainly it would have been worth while if the occupiers had been together enough to cause damage on a larger scale, probably involving acting in larger groups and being prepared to counter police attempts to stop us. But at the time we, and most of the people there, didn't see much alternative to leaving united. Nevertheless we do feel the machinery compound occupation was a very positive action - especially if it is an encouragement to continuing direct action against the building of Torness.

The remaining two days of the occupation were largely anticlimax, with the machinery compound securely guarded by a sizeable contingent of police - though some people did good work in sacking an office cabin, thus boosting the total damage estimate to £20,000.

It was interesting that opposition to the compound occupation came not only from



open reformists in SERA, SCRAM, and Friends of the Earth, but also from pacifists who consider themselves 'non-violent revolutionaries' along 'Peace News' lines. Such people were noted trying to stop people damaging machinery and urging the occupiers to leave the compound. 'Peace News' coverage of the May event has been strongly slanted against the compound occupiers. A striking example of how pacifists' total commitment to 'non-violence' can lead them in a confrontation to side with the authorities and against those challenging private property and capitalist legality.

THE TORNESS ALLIANCE

Over the period of the Torness occupation a small group of people, including some members of Edinburgh SCRAM, and SERA, and a member of the USA Clamshell Alliance, acted as an 'informal leadership' by dominating spokespeople's meetings, doing liaison work with the police, and giving out the official press statements. These individuals all favoured total 'non-violence' and keeping on friendly terms with the police and capitalist media, and opposed damage to property.

People need to develop the ability to organise actions like Torness democratically and effectively, without either the development of such an elite, or a descent into chaos and confusion.

Some decisions - such as when to start the occupation - need to be collective majority decisions which the minority should abide by. These decisions should be made, after full discussion in smaller groups, by properly organised mass meetings that allow everyone a direct vote. But many decisions - such as whether or not to damage property - don't need to be collective decisions binding on everyone. For example, those who want to sabotage bulldozers and those who want to plant flowers can both just get on with it - they are not mutually exclusive activities.

Some members of Leninist groups, such as the International Marxist Group and the Socialist Workers Party, are trying to import their notions of 'democratic centralism' into the anti-

nuclear movement. For example Socialist Challenge of 17th May states 'the most disturbing thing was that some of the anarchists unilaterally decided to sabotage equipment in the compound - not holding themselves accountable to either the Torness Alliance or the majority of the occupation. There is no means of overcoming divisions in the movement over tactics without democratic decision-making'.

Imposing a uniform strategy on all involved in the anti-nuclear movement can only stifle the creativity and development of the movement. Further if, in such a broad based campaign, the strategy was to be limited only to actions that the majority of people were themselves prepared to carry out, then revolutionaries would probably be faced with the choice of either totally abandoning direct action against property or having to completely cut ourselves off from the rest of the movement in order to carry out the activities we believe in.

HOW SHOULD WE FIGHT NUCLEAR POWER?

How its best to fight nuclear power depends very much on why the British government, and governments in general, want to develop nuclear power. The advocates of a respectable pressure group approach seem to think that the government is mistaken and misguided and have not realised the dangers of nuclear power. Therefore what is needed is to convince the government that they are wrong through argument, and through showing them that lots of people are against nuclear power.

But a much more convincing analysis is that the government want to develop nuclear power because to do so is in the interests of the state and the ruling class. They realise the hazards of nuclear power - but they care more about the benefits they will gain. These include: the securing of the massive amounts of energy needed in a centralised form by a wasteful profit-orientated industry; the supply from nuclear power stations of plutonium and tritium for nuclear weapons; increasing the importance of an energy source which is under the direct control of government, this being in the interests

of the increasingly important state capitalist section of the ruling class; the reduction of dependency on the militant miners, while the workforce in nuclear installations is tightly controlled and vetted; the profits to be made by powerful capitalist corporations from the huge amount of work needed to manufacture and build nuclear reactors; a decreased reliance on oil from the OPEC countries. In addition those who are fuelling the existing political trends to a more authoritarian society are willing to support the Nuclear Industry, irrespective of any supposed need for the energy it produces, because it appears to provide a 'technical' cover for the introduction of authoritarian measures.

Thus for the anti-nuclear movement to have an impact it must outweigh the advantages the system gains from nuclear power by the amount of trouble its development will cause - in terms of social disruption, political unpopularity, and increased financial costs due to disruption, sabotage, etc.. It is not a case of convincing the government by argument - it is a case of forcing them to re-consider. And in view of the way in which nuclear power serves fundamental capitalist interests the success of the anti-nuclear movement will be limited until it consciously challenges the existence of government, private and state property, and profit based industry. Ultimately energy sources will only be developed in a safe, ecological, human fashion when the resources involved have been taken into the direct control of the entire community.

In order to have any chance of forcing the government to change course the anti-nuclear movement must put a major stress on direct action. There are many forms this can take. mass occupations involving as much disruption of work and damage to building and machinery as possible and smaller 'guerilla' direct actions such as preventing particularly important machinery being brought onto the site:

If such actions became widespread and continual, it could considerably disrupt, and increase the costs of, the building of Torness.

The movement is a long way from this scale of action at present - Torness in May can only be regarded as a start.

For us, direct action is not only an effective tactic. Through taking direct action people directly fight against the system themselves. There are no 'mediators' such as MP's or trade union negotiators and people themselves collectively assert their own needs by their own actions.

Damaging capitalist property being used in anti-human way involves people demonstrating in practice that peoples needs should come before capitalist property rights. If generalised it involves rejecting the rights of the state, companies or individuals to own any of the means of production.

Direct action, democratically organised, for aims which are genuinely in working class peoples interests, is consistent with, and hopefully helps towards, the consciousness and organisation needed to overthrow all hierarchy and create a whole self-managed society.

A form of direct action with great immediate effect would be a refusal to co-operate by sections of workers involved in the manufacture, transport, or construction of the nuclear power station. Such actions have a precedent in the Australian 'Green Bans Movement'. There, building labourers refused to work on construction projects they considered to be against working class interests, such as pulling down houses to build offices. The high unemployment and uncertain prospects in both the British building industry and in the manufacture of power station machinery make for an absolutely massive task there. Possibly there would be more chance of headway in at least raising the idea of workers refusing to transport important machinery to the site.

SCRAM SUPPORTER: 'We're from SCRAM and we've just come to talk to you about what's happening with the occupation of the site at Torness.'

1ST WORKER: 'Oh, its a pity you're not occupying the site today, we thought we might get another holiday.'

2ND WORKER: 'With a bit of luck we might get another day off because of the damage to the machinery!'



THE REFORMISTS' ARGUMENT - OUR REPLIES

Reformists in the Torness Alliance argue that the anti-nuke movement must be respectable, to help obtain mass support. Numbers are important - but equally important is that masses of people are prepared to take direct action which will worry the authorities. The government will happily ignore mass opposition to nuclear power if those involved aren't prepared to do anything. Getting support on the basis that a totally legal pressure group campaign can succeed will only lead to mass disillusionment when this strategy fails.

The 'respectable' Alliance people are obsessed with obtaining favourable mass media coverage. It is disastrous for the anti-nukes movement to tailor its actions specifically to getting good media reports. The mass media are all controlled either by the state, private corporations, or extremely rich individuals. Once any movement takes direct action in opposition to the law, confronts the state, or threatens any of the basic values of the system, the mass media will hammer it. The only way the anti-nukes movement can guarantee continual sympathetic media coverage is by staying respectable - and ineffective.

We should take responsibility for our own actions and judge them by our own criteria. When we engage in activity, reality is what we ourselves do, and how we interact with others present; reality is not our actions transformed into another spectacle in the media. 'The revolution will not be televised: the revolution will be live.'

Many argue that the anti-Torness movement must maintain good relationships with the police. But the police are part of the state, the whole purpose of which is to protect the power and private property of the ruling class.

Developing 'friendly relations' with the police hierarchy is absurd. Of course they're going to be friendly, as long as the Alliance leadership ensure that the law is only broken in the most symbolic way, and do the police's job for them, by controlling demonstrators who step out of line.

There is much controversy over the question of 'non-violence'. As far as we know the only violent acts at Torness were the actions of the police in arresting two people. There was a considerable amount of damage to machinery and property. Private property is violence against people. It is impossible to do violence to property.

The question of violence arises only in relation to people. Here, we disagree with the absolute commitment to 'non-violence' in all circumstances held by the Torness Alliance. This attitude can lead to extreme submissiveness to authority, for example, the 'Torness Alliance Occupiers Handbook' recommends that if attacked you should not retaliate but roll up into a ball and think of something else!

The anti-nuke movement should be as non-violent as it is possible to be without the effectiveness of its actions being adversely affected. We should not avoid entering into actions merely because the police might try and stop us, thus raising the possibility of physical confrontation - such an attitude would quickly condemn us to total ineffectiveness.

FUTURE ACTION

RE-OCCUPYING AT TORNES

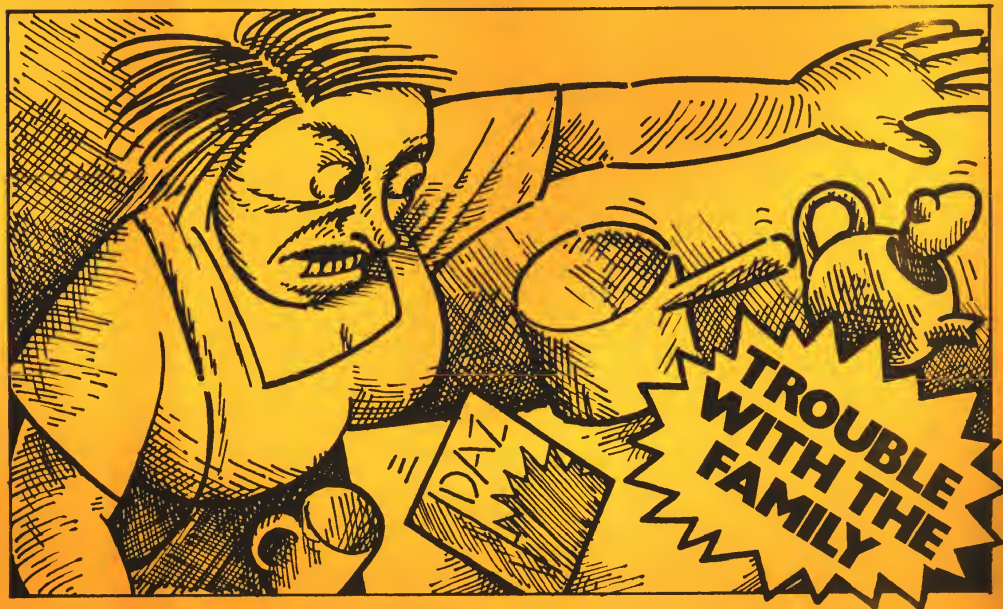
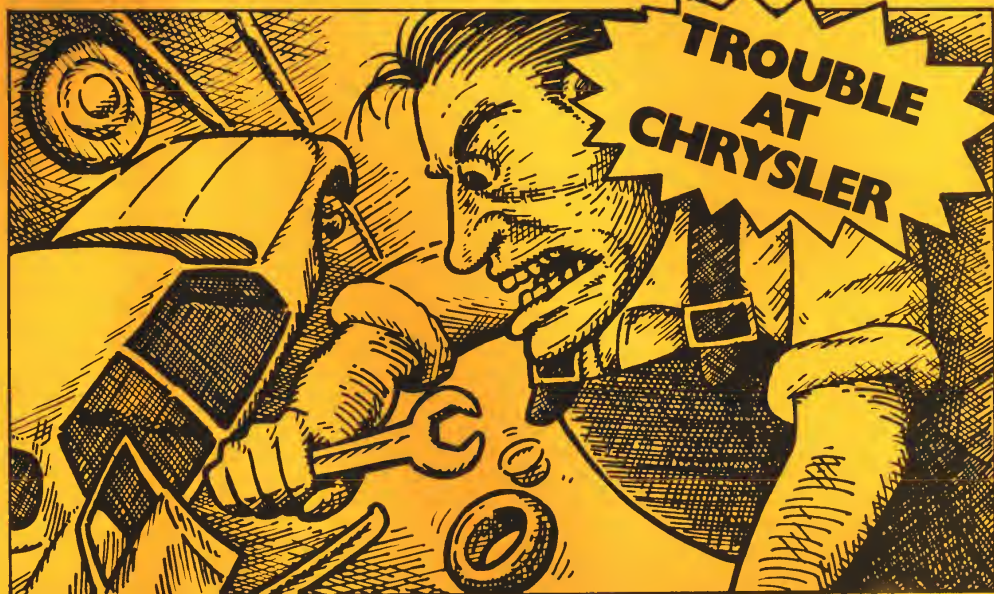
Representatives of 10 anti-nuke groups met in London on June 17th to discuss a re-occupation of the Torness construction site. It was resolved to re-occupy for a week or so in September following the SCRAM day of action (set for September 15th). The re-occupation will aim to delay construction work. The June 17th meeting resolved to involve all the anti-nuclear groups wishing to participate in and publicise this occupation. More information from Reading Anti-Nuclear Group, c/o Students Union, Whiteknights, Reading.

solidarity

FOR SOCIAL REVOLUTION

No.10 October/November 1979

15p



ANATOMY OF AN INDUSTRIAL STRUGGLE



INTRODUCTION

This article by Garry Hill, a worker at the Tonsley Park Chrysler plant near Adelaide in Australia, describes a series of struggles in which he was actively involved.

The text tells of the conflict inside the factory, the rough and tumble of mass meetings, workers' resistance to production, the tactics of management and the role of the trade union - in this case the notorious Vehicle Builders' Union. It documents the union's collusion with the bosses

and its links with South Australia's Labour government. It is interesting how in describing a single struggle the author has laid bare the whole rotten system of capitalism.

The experience described will be familiar to car workers elsewhere. It closely parallels events at vehicle plants throughout the world: Fiat in Italy, G.M. at Lordstown in the US, Ford at Valencia in Spain and Dagenham in Britain, Cowley, to mention only a few. It illustrates how the rise of multinationals is having the effect of integrating workers' struggles internationally and how, in spite of all problems, the fight on the factory floor goes on, day in day out.

Crucial for the media campaign against Chrysler workers was the support of Don Dunstan. Dunstan upheld the VBU bureaucrats as honest men, and obligingly spread the lies already being circulated by the Murdoch media. Because of his intellectual gifts Dunstan has been able to build up a considerable following in Australia who will blindly believe anything he says.

What his followers didn't know was that Dunstan was a close friend of Robert Murdoch. Wherever in Adelaide, Murdoch makes a point of seeing Dunstan. Until the Salisbury affair (see below) the Murdoch media gave Dunstan a very favourable image, unlike that dished out to other Labour leaders.

Dunstan's support for the VBU didn't go unnoticed. His popularity dropped and his image became somewhat tarnished. Many people in Salisbury began to see him as just another politician. In early 1978 he became entangled in the Salisbury affair, a messy case involving political spying, and by the end of 1978 his popularity sagged. In February 1979 he resigned due to ill-health.

In Tonsley Park there were massive cut-backs in 1978. Chrysler then introduced a dozen sackings each pay-day - no awkward headlines that way. There are rumours that the place is closing down, or being taken over by the Japanese. No new RAF has sprung up, as we had hoped might happen.

In retrospect, it would have been almost impossible for RAF to win at Chrysler in 1977. Opposing us were the entire media, both parliamentary political parties, the forces of the state, Chrysler, the union bureaucracy and two trad left groups: the SPA and the SLL. On our side were sections of a divided workforce, and three left groups: WSA, IS and LSF. However, RAF could have got further if the unaffiliated members had seen the importance of a clear political strategy, if WSAers had not mixed their vanguardism with their excellent shop-floor record, and if the libertarians and their sympathisers had had more political experience and acumen. But with all its limitations, RAF stands out as something to be remembered and emulated by workers fed up with reformist trade unionism.

Garry Hill

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FOR SOCIAL REVOLUTION

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With Special Supplement

about ourselves

SOLIDARITY is a libertarian communist organisation comprising autonomous groups and individuals. The political basis of membership is general agreement with our 'As We See It' and 'As We Don't See It' publications. Members are expected to contribute financially to the organisation and to actively propagate Solidarity politics in the class struggle.

Our organisation is open and democratic and members have full scope to express differing ideas within the agreed political basis of membership.

The editing and production of the magazine is rotated between different, geographically separated groups in line with this approach and in an effort to share skills and develop the strength of the organisation as a whole.

Whilst our members actively intervene, individually and collectively, in areas of the class struggle ranging from sexual liberation to strikes and occupations, our aim is not to impose ourselves as leaders, but to assist in clarifying political issues and strengthening the self-reliance and independence of our fellow workers. We recognise that we also have much to learn in this process.

If you have read 'As We Don't See It', generally agree with the politics outlined there and are interested in joining Solidarity, then write to the Secretary c/o Manchester group, for further details.

PUBLICATION POLICY

Acceptance of articles and letters depends on a variety of factors including their length (they could be too long or too short in relation to the subject they are attempting to cover), clearness of expression, topicality, recent coverage in other editions of the magazine and so on.

We try to avoid publishing articles full of unnecessary jargon, although this consideration is sometimes ignored where we consider that it contains important ideas.

We do accept articles written by sympathetic non-members and writers of long letters are asked to consider writing articles instead. Letters should generally be kept short and precise, otherwise they are likely to be edited.

Articles and letters not published in one edition are passed on to the group producing the next edition, so even if your contribution is not published in the end, it will receive a wide circulation within the group.

NOTE: While the contents of this magazine generally reflect the politics of the group, articles signed by individuals don't necessarily represent the views of all members.

NEW PAMPHLETS

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Solidarity(London) £1.00.

THE WORKERS OPPOSITION
BY ALEXANDRA KOLLANTAI.
The anti-bureaucratic struggle inside the Bolshevik Party 1919-1920.
Solidarity(London) 75p.

PERSONS UNKNOWN

The trial of six anarchists on 'conspiracy' charges continues amidst a seemingly deliberate media blackout. They still require assistance financial and otherwise.

The London support group have produced an excellent booklet outlining both the personal traumas involved and the political significance of the case, (price approximately 50p).

Write to: 'Persons Unknown'
c/o Box 123, 182 Upper St,
London, N1.

Appeal

In an effort to realise the age old ideal of socialism - the abolition of money, Solidarity is urging you to send your money to us so that we can finance more pamphlets and supplements! Please send all donations to the Solidarity Treasurer,

John Cowan, (3R)
17 Cheviot Crescent,
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SOLIDARITY FOR SOCIAL REVOLUTION.

Back issues are available for 25p each or £1.75 for the complete set, including postage.

<u>Issue</u>	<u>Main Articles</u>
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No 9.	Torness - Keeping it Clean; In search of Ruling Class; Manifesto for Radical Diplomats.
No 10.	Chrysler - Australia; Youth in China; The Tender Trap; Beyond the Fragments.

Write, enclosing a cheque or PO to London or Manchester Groups.

ALL LIBERATED NOW ?

Is capitalism abolishing oppression of ideas of 'women's rights'. I think there are two possible interpretations of this situation.

There's been the Equal Pay and Sex Discrimination Acts. It's now quite accepted for women to have a career and thus a degree of economic independence. And as for gays, homosexuality for both males and females is now legal and gay clubs, bars and magazines abound'. So the arguments are often put. Even some revolutionaries hold views along these lines. For example a group in Leeds argue, in a discussion paper reprinted in *Solidarity for Social Revolution no. 6* ('Anti-sexism: the affirmation of alienation') that 'the ending of oppressive sex roles in many areas of social life is a conscious and major aim of modern capitalism'.

This is by no means an academic argument. On the contrary it has important repercussions for revolutionaries' activity. If capitalism is of itself ending sex roles oppression then, to say the least, this need not be such an important priority for us.

But if capitalism is not of itself ending oppressive sex roles, this throws the onus onto us to end the oppression through our own conscious activity.

Here I want to argue that, on the whole, capitalism is not of itself ending oppressive sex roles.

Before examining what is happening today in various areas where sex roles oppression operates, I think we need to differentiate between two different trends within capitalism. On the one hand there are changes which are wanted by, and are in the interests of, the capitalist class and the state. On the other hand there are developments within capitalism which are taking place due to the activities of working people, or of a section of working people, acting in their own interests. While we would be suspicious of developments of the first kind, we would support developments of the second kind and would probably be involved in working for them.

EQUAL EXPLOITATION FOR WOMEN?

In recent years we have had the Equal Pay Act and the Sex Discrimination Act. These were passed through Parliament by the capitalist Labour Party, but during a period when there had been a considerable number of 'equal pay' strikes and a strengthen-

Some would argue that the capitalist class and state favour ending discrimination against women at work because it is in the long-term interests of the economy to do so. This would be through women being brought fully into the workforce on an equal basis with men, thereby increasing both the total workforce and the skilled proportion of the workforce (through women engineers, welders, etc.) which would be available for exploitation. It is also argued that higher wages and greater economic independence for women would enlarge the market for many goods and services.



A second interpretation is that the Equal Pay and Sex Discrimination Acts (SDA) are attempts by the state to recuperate, through partial concessions, a movement which, at the least, could significantly increase employers' costs and, at best, could also increase the general self-confidence and combativity of the workforce. Evidence for this is that the Equal Pay and Sex Discrimination Acts are not at present achieving their stated aims. Women's average wages are still only about two-thirds those of men. This is through women being segregated into lower-paying industries and (where men and women work together) into the lower-paid jobs, often through grading schemes specially designed to get round the Equal Pay Act.

Similarly, while the SDA forces employers to change advertising practices (i.e. to advertise for a 'draughtsman/woman') this doesn't stop informal discrimination. It doesn't alter the fact that at school,

generally, it is the boys who are directed towards technical subjects while the girls are expected to do domestic science.

For there to be significant moves towards equality between men and women at work, there would have to be greatly improved pre-school child care facilities. At present such facilities are being cut back rather than extended.

In conditions of a booming economy the ruling class might well consider the cost of real Equal Pay and improved child care facilities worth the benefit they would gain from having more workers to exploit and from boosting market demand. However, in today's conditions of world-wide high unemployment and depression, there is not much incentive for the ruling class to end discrimination against women in employment.

Discrimination against women in employment is only one area of oppression caused by the sex roles attributed to people under capitalism. The ending of this discrimination, while all other areas of oppression based on sex roles remained untouched, would not at all imply that capitalism had in general ended oppression on the grounds of sex or sexual orientation.

KIDS 'n DISHES 'n RELATIONSHIPS

As already mentioned the state in Britain, far from expanding pre-school child care provision (and thus easing the burden of the mother) is on the contrary cutting back on the provision of nurseries, day-care centres, etc. As far as the responsibility for child care and domestic work within the family goes, it is still overwhelmingly regarded as the woman's responsibility. This is apparently as true in state capitalist countries such as the USSR as in the West. In the area of personal relationships it is still 'accepted' that in conventional male-female relationships the man is the dominant partner, the person who takes the initiative and is the chief decision-maker. This ranges from who asks who to dance at the disco to who is 'head of the household'. The oppressive nature of men-women relationships is still widely manifested in extreme forms such as women being attacked by their partners, through street hassles, sexual assaults and rape.

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 7

There is no attempt by the capitalist media or educational system to try and remove these forms of oppression. The set-up where child care and domestic work are 'a woman's job' is very useful to capitalist industry. Its current and future workers are fed and generally cared for by women's unpaid work. Capital is thus spared the cost of having to provide expensive child care facilities, communal laundries and canteens, etc. The oppressive nature of men-women relationships also aids capitalism. Divisions amongst the oppressed can only benefit our rulers.

It is true that men probably do take more responsibility for child care and domestic work now than they did, say, fifteen years ago. There is, on the whole, perhaps less inequality in men-women relationships. This is largely due to the change in climate caused by the growth of the Women's Movement, and is something we should encourage.

An important aspect of sex roles oppression is unsatisfying sexual relationships. In this area both men and women are oppressed. Again, this is obviously something which can only be changed by women and men themselves; there is no way capitalism of itself can end this oppression.

O.K. TO BE GAY?

I see no signs of any dynamic in capitalism working towards ending the oppression of gay people. There is, it is true, what appears to be a fairly flourishing section of the entertainment industry aimed at gays: gay bars, clubs, magazines, pornography etc. This does not necessarily lead to any general acceptance of homosexuality as equally valid to heterosexuality. Often it merely creates a gay ghetto. Moreover the values and attitudes prevalent in these commercial gay enterprises are frequently oppressive and sexist. In both Britain and the USA the last two or three years have seen the oppression of gays worsen in several ways. In Britain there has been the prosecution of Gay News, cases of people being sacked for wearing gay badges at work, and a considerable number of physical attacks on gay people, especially in London. In the USA 'Equal Rights' legislation outlawing discrimination against homosexuals has been repealed in several states, in the context of the active anti-gay campaigning of right-wing groups led by such as Anita Bryant.



Among some sections of young people especially the situation is more encouraging. In the fields of both 'left' politics and the rock music/politics sub-culture there is probably a growing realisation of the importance of gay liberation. More gay people are prepared to stand up against their oppression. This again is a change of attitudes and consciousness in a positive direction. It should be encouraged; it can't be dismissed as just a sinister capitalist plot to co-opt the revolution by getting everyone to spend their money on Tom Robinson Band records.

While it is conceivable that within capitalism there could be considerably greater acceptance of gayness than there is now, I believe that capitalism benefits from anti-gay attitudes and therefore that those in power are unlikely to encourage people to regard homosexuality as being as valid as heterosexuality. Capitalism is bolstered by the belief that the nuclear family is basic to our lives, that the man's role is to go out and be hard and competitive in a tough world and try to climb the ladder to success. While the woman may have a job, she must dedicate herself to bringing up the children and 'homemaking'. The nuclear family also enhances the consumption of the goods which capitalism produces. To every family its washing machine, TV, cooker, spin dryer, etc., etc.

Gay relationships potentially threaten the 'natural' sex roles of men and women and the nuclear family set-up (it is only a potential threat because many gay relationships mimic traditional heterosexual relationships in their role-playing, etc.). This makes it easier for capitalism to label homosexuality as something 'wrong' or as an 'unfortunate illness'.

BE A MAN, IF YOU CAN

Sex roles oppress men through conditioning them to repress their emotions and be aggressive and competitive. This oppression is very much linked to the maintenance of class oppression. If men accept the idea of being tough aggressive competitors in a tough aggressive competitive world, they are not very likely to unite with other men and women to fight against the hierarchical system and its rulers. Thus (and this should cause no surprise), far from developing the means of ending this form of oppression, capitalism continues to promote it. It does so, for instance, through exams, assessments and competitive sports at school, and through the promotion rat race at work.

A challenge to these values has developed in the last few years. This has not come from any agency of capitalism but through men getting together to discuss and try to overcome this oppressive conditioning in groups such as 'Men against Sexism'. Once again, I think this is a positive development which we should support and, where appropriate, get involved in.

WHAT WE GONNA DO ABOUT IT?

Having looked at the different areas of oppression caused by capitalism's sex roles, I would argue that in only one of these (discrimination against women in employment) is there any possibility that capitalism itself is attempting to end the oppression. And even in this case it is highly debatable whether this is in fact happening. In all the other areas - women being burdened with an unfair share of child care and domestic work and oppressed in personal relationships, the oppression of gays, and the oppressive conditioning of men - no significant attempt is being made by any agency of capitalism to end the oppression. In some of these areas there is opposition to the oppression - from the efforts of sections of working people acting in their own interests. These are positive developments which we should welcome and be involved in. We should encourage those involved to oppose all oppressive relationships. As revolutionaries, we need to make the fight against oppressive sex roles one of our major activities. The oppression which people suffer due to their sex, or due to their sexual orientation, is as important as that suffered through their not having

control over society's productive resources. The two oppressions are interlinked

How we could and should fight oppressive sex roles could be the subject for another article. Independent organising by women, gays and men, and united activity by women and men, and homosexuals and heterosexuals are both important and valuable. Revolutionaries should not hesitate to criticise harmful trends - such as reformism and separatism - in the Women's, Gay and Men's movements. But we must also recognise the need and right of people to get together independently to discuss and act against their particular oppressions. And, perhaps most important, fighting oppressive sex roles should not be just another 'issue' for us to campaign on. We should try to make it integral to how we organise politically, and to how we live our everyday lives and relationships.

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APOLOGY: We apologise for numerous typing errors in this issue. None of us are good typists and we have corrected as many errors as our patience will allow. Solidarity(Manchester).



Cartoon by Walter Crane, political contemporary of William Morris

The Myth of Mao's Self-Management



Mao Tse-tung. Marble: Mao's tomb, Peking.

Anarchists and libertarians have often spoken of libertarian socialism as more or less synonymous with a system of "generalised self-management". (Bertolo, Solidarity etc.). [By 'generalised self-management' we mean the extension of self-managed struggles against capitalism to all areas of social life, eventually involving a revolutionary rupture with the whole of the existing social order on a world scale. The self managed society we seek can only be achieved by the removal of capitalist economic restraints such as wage labour, commodity production and the market. It is important to stress this since some concepts of self-management in libertarian circles amounts to little more than 'self-managed exploitation'.] E.E.

To them the self-management model is one where there has been "a universal socialisation of science conducive to the abolition of hierarchical division of labour." (Berti.), "the overthrow of the social and technical division of labour and the socially equalitarian distribution of work itself under the maximum possible automation of the productive processes." (Guiducci.), "collective management by all the personnel of an enterprise, of the activities of the enterprise itself, forward planning, execution, control etc. preceded by the structural transformation of society" (Meister), "the re-establish-

ment of an authentic relationship between the real needs of society and enterprises which would exclude the manipulation of needs by the latter and this mutual authentic relationship would be best generated and attained in the small enterprise" (Prandstaller), "in addition to a libertarian system of industrial management, the development of a new 'self' in a moral cultural and personal sense that stands in harsh contradiction with the hierarchical nature of the factory and the broadening of the locus for self-management to include not just industry but communities and municipalities; in addition to a new, non-hierarchical technology that will replace the factory as a social and economic model and 'already exists as a 'people's technology' in the form of small, human-scaled, easily comprehensible community technologies based on decentralised gardening, solar, and wind-power techniques" (Bookchin.)

MYTHS.

It has often been claimed that Mao Tse-tung tried to build Chinese society into one which has many features similar to those essential elements of the self-management model cited above

On the question of division of labour, it is said that Mao tried to eliminate the three major differences; the differences

CONTINUED ON PAGE 10

ABORTION: THE INSIDE STORY

SHOULD WE 'ABHOR A VACUUM'?

THIS IS NOT AN INSTRUCTION LEAFLET ON DO-IT-YOURSELF ABORTION, AND TO USE IT AS SUCH COULD BE DISASTROUS. ITS AIM IS TO PROVIDE INFORMATION ON THE TECHNIQUE - SPECIALISED BUT NOT IMPENETRABLY MYSTERIOUS - OF 'MENSTRUAL EXTRACTION'. WHAT IS IT ABOUT ? WHAT ARE THE SNAGS ? WHERE CAN ONE FIND OUT MORE ?

Irrespective of what happens in Parliament, the struggle to control our own bodies, ourselves, must and will continue. If certain laws make it easier rather than (as usual) more difficult, that's fine. But the matter is too important to be left to politicians or to governments. It is also too important for us to abdicate control, or the right to relevant knowledge, and to put ourselves unreservedly and unquestioningly in the hands of the 'experts'.

Of course there is a need for skills and special knowledge, and plenty of it. We are not against expertise. But we are against its monopolisation and against anyone making a fetish of it. Experts, even medical ones, can and do make mistakes. Moreover their decisions may be influenced by non-medical considerations. Responsible ordinary people can make themselves experts, if they choose to, in matters that concern them very closely.

One area where we may have to learn more for ourselves, instead of putting pressure on others to do things for us, is that of simple, safe, early abortion. Basing themselves on existing experience, and collaborating with each other and with sympathetic, well-informed health workers, women in France and in the USA have developed their own health-care facilities, ready to undertake procedures on the borderline of legality. This, incidentally, proved a most effective way of getting the law changed.

In this country the chances of having a very early abortion done on the NHS are slim and probably getting slimmer. If we want to make sure it is and remains one of our options, the only way may be for increasing numbers to get together with gynaecologists and other doctors, midwives and nurses and train systematically to do it themselves. Where this has been done with care and commitment, results have been encouraging. In fact they have at times been better than those obtained in more formally structured clinical trials conducted by high-powered professionals. In one American clinic (Karman, 1972) where ex-abortion patients volunteered to help, 21 out of 45 persevered through an 18-week training course and achieved a high level of proficiency. These women had no previous medical training: their educational backgrounds ranged from 2 years in high school to a master's degree in social work.

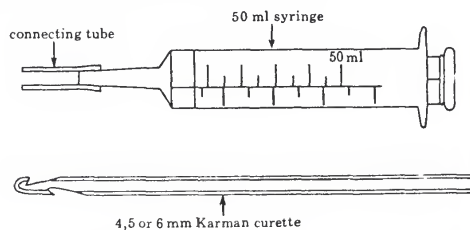
This example shows what can be done under optimum conditions, with the involvement of highly-motivated people including some professionals, willing to learn and with open minds. It may not always be that easy. Any such project must be approached in a responsible way and in full awareness of the possible risks if it is not to result in a list of self-managed horror stories (or at least cautionary tales).

THE KARMAN TECHNIQUE

In a classic paper on the subject, Dr. Harvey Karman (of the Dept. of Medical Research, San Vicente Hospital, Los Angeles, California) stressed that 'although the public had been conditioned to think of abortion as a major operation involving considerable risk, it was obviously absurd to compare an 8-week gestation (which can be aspirated without dilation in 30 seconds on a conscious patient) with a 13-week D and C (dilation of the cervix and curettage) or a 16-week hysterotomy (incision of the uterus)'.

Karman felt that many common assumptions regarding the dangers of abortion proved, on re-examination, to be an indictment of the techniques used or of available equipment. 'It was obvious, for instance, that if a way could be found to avoid the use of tenacula (forceps for grasping the cervix), cervical laceration would be substantially reduced or prevented. Since metal sounds, dilators and curettes would inevitably cause a certain percentage of perforations, these instruments were considered unacceptable'. Karman's first task was to design instrumentation that could safely lend itself to more widespread use. 'Indispensable to this objective was the discovery that cervical dilation was unnecessary in most cases because of the fluidity of embryonic tissue'. Later in pregnancy, of course, this changes.

'For early terminations a small bore, flexible cannula was designed to serve simultaneously as sound, suction wand and blunt curette'. Although 'verbal anaesthesia' proved quite adequate in the majority of cases, each patient was told that a local anaesthetic was available to carry out a 'cervical block'. A short film demonstrating the procedure was screened for those interested in a detailed preview. This proved very helpful. Patients were all carefully interviewed beforehand with a view to discovering those with gynaecological or other disorders, who might have to be referred for more specialised help.



The pregnancies were of about 6-8 weeks' duration (i.e. the menstrual period was from 10-28 days overdue). The patient was not starved or shaved but simply removed her undergarments and lay down on her back with heels drawn up and knees separated (the lithotomy position). Some authorities recommend that the vulva be cleansed with cetavlon and most suggest that the vagina and cervix be swabbed with a povidone-iodine solution. A paramedic first 'evaluated the uterus bimanually for size and configuration'. Any abnormalities were noted, as probably requiring the attention of a physician. The purpose was to exclude the presence of any pelvic mass other than the gravid uterus and to ensure that the womb was not bigger than it should be for the stated duration of the pregnancy. A plastic (non-metallic) speculum of the right size was then chosen to gain good visibility of the cervix and inserted into the vagina. The 'blades' were separated just enough to provide easy access.

A sterile, flexible plastic cannula, slightly precurved manually to fit each patient's uterine outline, was then inserted through the os (the opening of the cervix), using the no-touch technique. The cannula was used to gently 'sound' the uterine cavity. 'If the sounded depth indicates a gestational size consistent with a palpatational estimate of 8 weeks' gestation or less, a (self-locking) 50 ml vacuum syringe is attached directly to the cannula. The piston is then slowly withdrawn and locked in position to maintain a negative pressure. Rotative action of the cannula tip near the site of implantation, accompanied by gentle stroking movements to create contact with the entire lining of the womb, is usually sufficient to evacuate the conceptus painlessly in 45 seconds'. The volume fits easily into a 50 ml syringe. Karman had stressed in an earlier paper (1972) how vitally important it

was never to thrust the plunger of the syringe inwards when it was attached to a cannula in the uterus. If even a small amount of air was injected a very dangerous complication called air embolism might follow. 'Should the cervix not admit the cannula readily or tend to retract, it is gently grasped by blunt forceps to stabilise its position'.

Following the procedure a medicated tampon was inserted in the vagina. Most of Karman's patients could leave within half an hour. Post-operative instructions were minimal: 'Contact the clinic any time you have a question, a fever above 101.4°F, or bleeding or cramping in excess of normal menstruation'. Fever implies infection and excessive bleeding usually implies that the evacuation was not complete. These are the most likely complications. They are usually not serious but require skilled care.

In experienced hands (paramedical with medical supervision) the complication rate has been as low as 1.3% of 774 patients (Scotti and Karman, 1976). The risk of more serious complications is slight but not non-existent. Women must not be constrained to suppress potentially serious symptoms for fear of making trouble for the health collective.

Equipment should be disassembled, cleansed in soap and water and sterilised for 30 minutes in an antiseptic solution. Ideally, a Karman-type cannula should be used only once. If re-used it should be cold-sterilised - not in iodine or formalin but, for instance, in a 1 in 750 aqueous solution of benzalkonium chloride. It should be examined closely for signs of collapse or tearing at the tip and discarded if defective. Scrupulously clean hands (with or without sterile surgical gloves) are of course essential.

WHO CAN DO IT?

Even orthodox medics acknowledge that clinical experience, rather than academic qualification, counts in making people good at doing all this safely and effectively. Anyone taking on the responsibility should know what she is doing as thoroughly as possible, but commitment to the project and sympathy for the patients are also important. Contacts should be made with those who have already had adequate training (theoretical and practical). Training should include basic anatomical knowledge as well as a programme of observation, assisting, examining and talking with patients. Groups of trainees may practice on each other, extracting menses. It should be obvious, however, that no woman need feel duty-bound to participate in a collective doing this kind of work if it goes against her inclinations, however strong her sympathies with the project. By the same token no woman who is one week overdue need feel that she has to undergo this procedure immediately.

ADDRESSES

UK manufacturers of Karman-type kits (self-locking syringe and cannula): Rocket of London, Imperial Way, Watford, Herts. Tel.: Watford 397 91

International Planned Parenthood Federation: 18 Regent Street, SW1. Tel.: 01 839 2911

International Pregnancy Advisory Service (for information on obtaining kits): NCNB Plaza, Suite 300, Chapel Hill, North Carolina 27514, USA.

Graves Medical Audiovisual Library: P.O. Box 99, Holly House, Chelmsford CM2 9BJ. Tel.: 0245 83351.

THE LAW

Legal risks, like medical ones, must be consciously faced. As things stand, it is illegal in Britain to attempt (the intention is enough) to terminate a pregnancy except under the terms of the 1967 Abortion Act, i.e. it must be done by a qualified medical practitioner and with the proper certificates. Even if there was no actual pregnancy, an offence has been committed if an unqualified person tried to end one.

There is an area of possible ambiguity. It could be claimed that menstrual extraction or regulation was carried out routinely, or for diagnostic or therapeutic reasons rather than to terminate pregnancy. However, we do not advise anyone to pin their faith on this dodgy 'loophole'.

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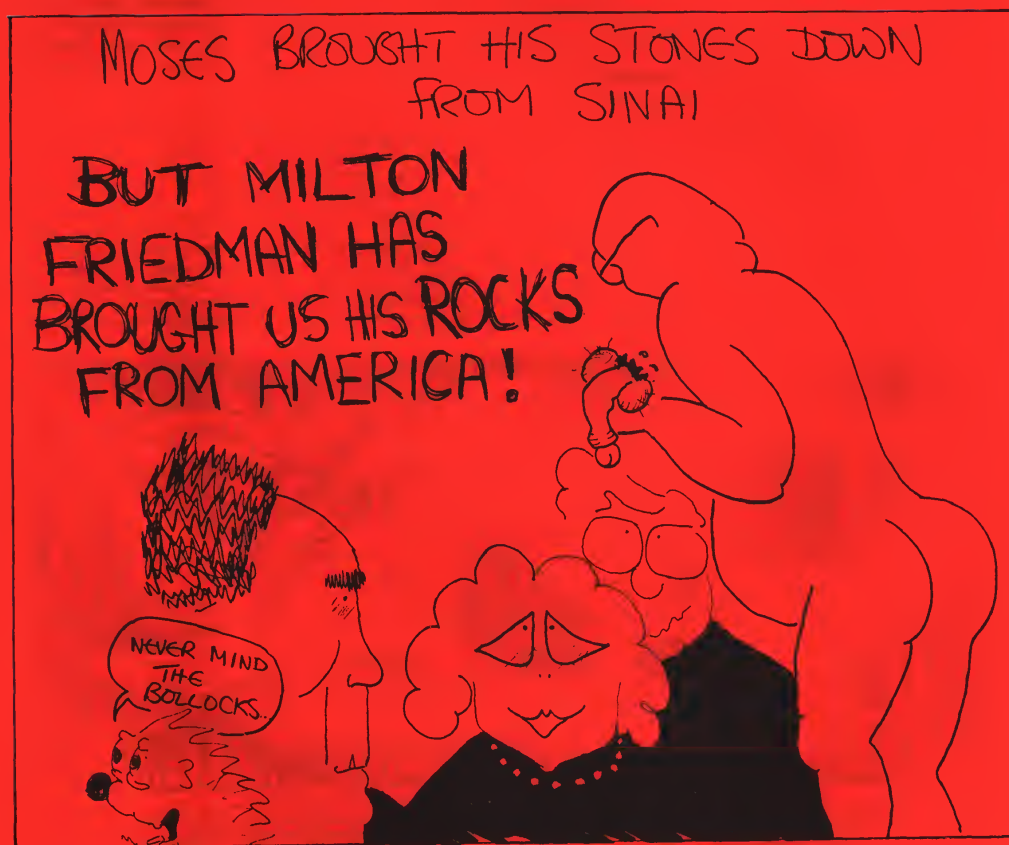
solidarity

FOR SOCIAL REVOLUTION

No. 12

MAY - JULY 1980

20p



**INSIDE: STEEL, ABORTION,
MANAGING UNEMPLOYED YOUTH,
UNION OFFICIAL INTERVIEWED**

OUT OURSELVES

Actual readers of this magazine will have noted the considerable diversity of views expressed in recent issues. While this must be frustrating for those who like to receive their opinions wrapped, we shall continue to refuse any commitment to a party line or dogmatic global ideology, nor do we recognize the constraints of party discipline which have shakey political thought and action for generations.

The disagreements which have been aired in these pages reflect the debates and divergent tendencies within Solidarity. It would be foolish to pretend that this lack of unanimity has not created problems for the group (or that the silence of other groups on such matters means that they have no internal dissensions). But there are many problems which have still to discover their solutions, not least because many of those solutions can only be practical ones, and to abandon our commitment to critical (and self-critical) thinking would signify the stagnation of our politics.

From the letters and comments we receive it is apparent that some articles have given rise to misunderstandings, while others would like to make all of us responsible for the opinions of each. Once again therefore: we are neither marxists nor anarchists. We have no need of the kind of acceptability to be gained by attaching labels to ourselves, or by tailoring our ideas to conform to the prejudices of others.

If we are not to recount the entirety of our political experience in every issue, it is inescapable that this magazine will be composed largely of fragments, the public formulation of a dialogue through which we give shape and substance to our lives. The least of our expectations is that a few of these articles, creatively applied, may be of service as we try to make sense of a bewildered world. While the contents of this magazine generally reflect the politics of the group, articles signed by individuals don't necessarily represent the views of all members.

The national secretary can be contacted via the Manchester address and the international secretary by writing to 83 Gregory Crescent, London SE9 5RZ. The remainder of our unwieldy bureaucracy will remain enshrouded in organisational secrecy by decree of the editorial section.

This issue of the magazine was edited and produced by group members in Leeds and Sheffield. Contributions to the next issue which will be produced by the London Group, should be sent to the London address.

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Soly knuckles rapped in Aberdeen

At an anti-cuts picket of the Grampian Regional Council headquarters in Aberdeen, the Labour Party and trade union banners were overshadowed by a giant banner wielded by Solidarity members, which proclaimed:

1974-79 LABOUR CHOP PUBLIC SERVICES
1979-80 TORIES CHOP PUBLIC SERVICES
NO TO TORY AND LABOUR — BOTH WIELD THE
AXE FOR CAPITALISM
YES TO INDEPENDENT WORKERS CLASS STRUGGLE

This caused some consternation among local Labour Party and trade union bureaucrats — the executive of Aberdeen Trades Council has told Solidarity that the offending banner will not be welcome on future marches, and that if it appears stewards will have instructions to 'deal with' the situation. Solidarity in Aberdeen has replied that they will continue to put forward the view that cuts can only be fought by direct action and by opposition to all capitalist political parties, using various means — including the taking of banners on demonstrations. The next Labour Party/trades council organized stroll through Aberdeen may be less soporific than usual.

At the same time, the rather tame picket was somewhat enlivened by the activities of 'persons unknown' who, the night before, covered the Council building with such slogans as CHOP POLITICIANS NOT SERVICES and PEOPLES NEED NOT BOSSES GREEDS. Solidarity readers will be alarmed to hear that this appalling act, which was featured prominently in the local press and TV, was roundly condemned by the Labour Party and Trades Council, while the local NALGO branch secretary announced that if any of his members were responsible, they would immediately be expelled and then handed over to the police!

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No.13

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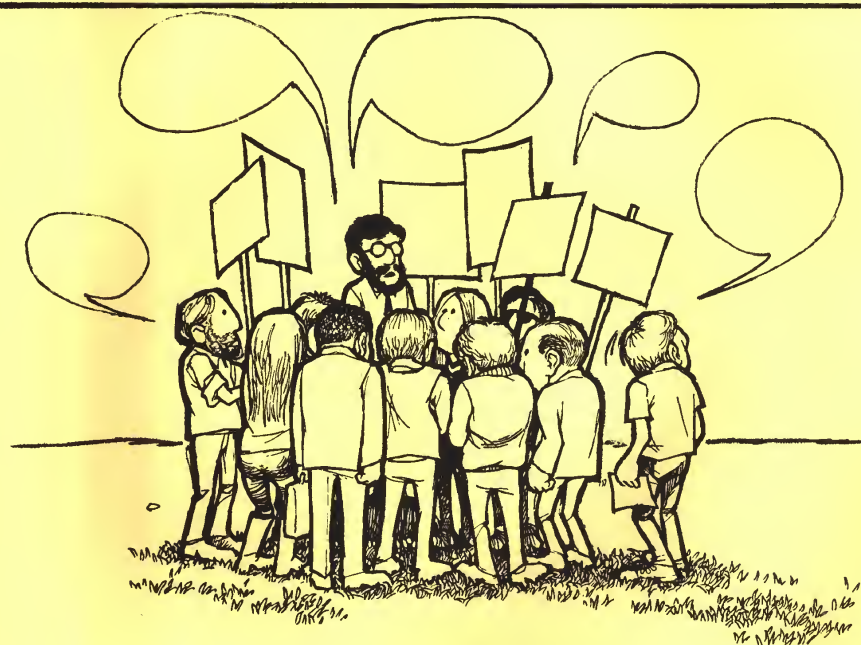
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FOR SOCIAL REVOLUTION

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THE LEFT - WHO GIVES A DAMN?

INSIDE: French CP, nukes, life in the
welfare state, statistics, world
war one, left ecumenism.....

PULL OUT FEATURE ON
POLAND

REVIEWS

Even a brief consideration of the 1919 Soldiers Strikes suggests that the British Left failed dismally to capitalise on the major internal crisis that developed in the Forces. In part this may have been because a clear and precise perspective on these events was denied the mass of the population. However it could equally be argued that the soldiers demands were not "political", in that they concentrated on demands that the State could accommodate without any major diminution in its coercive power. It was certainly true that in accelerating demobilisation, the State effectively divorced the ranks from the technical instruments (including weapons) that would alter the balance of power in any popular insurrection by working people.

It may not be necessary to secure the active co-operation by the rank and file of the Forces in order to secure the overthrow of the State. But without at least securing the neutrality of the Forces, the State will always be able to confront all threats to its hegemony by recourse to armed force. I would suggest that the wider dissemination of information about the rich tradition of collective action by Britain's squaddies and a sustained examination of such phenomena would be of considerable value in the tactical deliberations of the left during the present economic and political crisis.

EX-COLOUR-SERGEANT GUFF.



REVIEW OF "SOCIALISM AND HOUSING ACTION. THE RED PAPER ON HOUSING". Published by Socialist Housing Activists Workshop, Gateshead.

This 72 page pamphlet has emerged from a team of "activists engaged in housing struggles in major urban centres throughout the country - covering amongst other things the vital issues of clearance, improvement, rents, repairs and modernisation" as their introduction puts it. Having been involved to a minimal degree in a centre concentrating on such issues, in Govanhill, Glasgow, I imagine that most of them are paid and working in "voluntary organisations" receiving urban aid grants or as "free-lance" community workers.

"The social work left", as J.F. (Leeds) has characterised them, also includes species¹ of welfare rights advisors and "radical" social or youth workers, and must be added to the A.P.E.'s (architects, planners and

engineers) which inhabit the universe of social democracy. The name of the game is "deprivation" and the radicals play it too, except that the object is to build collective responses to attacks on living standards and to counter "the social distribution of knowledge" as modern sociologists would describe the process whereby the mass is dispossessed of information as to how the capitalist state functions.

The recipients of such knowledge, which coincides with the target audience of the pamphlet under review, is the "local activist" whose ranks have been swelled by leftists 'going to the people'³ Depending on whether the local activist is libertarian/authoritarian inclined he/she will seek to transmit this information on say modernisation to the wider network of potential "activists" in the area/use the information to legitimise a leadership position where dependency is encouraged, as in many C.P./broad left dominated Tenants/Residents Associations. The 'scientific' application of politics to the situation means for instance that there is a lot of committee manipulation to ensure lobbies of councillors at the appropriate moment and that use is made of the channels of communication to the authorities.

Anyway, having explored this target group for such publications what about the content itself? There is a detailed examination of HOW the market intervenes ("the chaotic system that rules our lives") according to what is most profitable as well as a historical summary of changes in housing patterns in the industrial epoch, and WHY the public sector/council housing must be defended from Tory designs to sell the best properties to the tenants.

The authors are 'libertarian Marxists' of some sort (like 'Big Flame') and continually re-state that "State control and intervention ... isn't socialism" but merely Labourism/State Capitalism. There is also a critique of "the family and private life" which presents an adequate description of how most working people are trapped in the working/private reality. They also challenge the separation of community/industrial struggle, BUT there a problem emerges. For the authors the labour movement reluctantly remains the central reference point. The socialist movement has the task of combatting this "separation" and "to develop within community action an approach similar to that used by the rank and file movement within industry" (here they forget about 'autonomy' and seem to have overlooked the current malaise of the S.W.P.'s strategy regarding the "rank and file")

A good antidote to such crap would be to read "The Refusal of Work", while "Modern Capitalism and Revolution", even 20 years on, remains a more accurate analysis of modern western capitalism, its core dynamic, than one which states "the system needs to re-invest most of the wealth it creates simply to survive. In the mad panic to survive, there's never enough left for the needs of the workers." Judge for yourself.

K.M. (Glasgow).

1. See "Urban Devastation: The Planning of Incarceration". (Solidarity).
2. See especially the journal "Community Action" or in Glasgow "Clydeside Action".
3. See "Solidarity and the Neo-Narodniks", (Solidarity Discussion Bulletin).
4. See the 1979 pamphlet by 'Echanges' on absenteeism and sabotage etc.

SOLIDARITY SUPPLEMENT



SUMMER IN GDANSK

Gdansk. - Not a single militiaman, except at the crossroads, still less tanks; a fine quiet town, completely serene, that you could go through without being surprised by anything but the absence of buses. This conurbation of Gdansk-Gdynia-Sopot is nevertheless in the middle of a general strike. One of the most profound crises in the history of the People's Democracies is hatching out here. Not a violent explosion, to be quickly repressed, but an overwhelming vote of censure on established authority - as simple and calm as the evidence and certainty of strength.

The increase in the price of meat, the initial cause of the wave of strikes, is now just a memory, a tiny element with no greater importance than the match which set the gunpowder alight. The question now is not money, but a unanimous affirmation that 'things must change'.

On Sunday, August 17, in the middle of the night after hours of negotiation, the bus drivers of Gdynia are offered a rise of 2100 zlotys on condition they resume work immediately. This sum represents almost half the average monthly

wage in Poland, say what 1500 F would be worth in France or £150 in Britain. The answer is a categorical No. No, because the whole of Gdansk must win the day first, and because the authorities must, above all, satisfy the political demands which the workers in all factories have put at the top of the list.

But let's retrace events. On Friday morning, at daybreak on August 15, the strikers in the Lenin shipyards, at a standstill since the day before, rejected their management's proposals. At the same time, public transport stopped. 8000 of the 12,000 workers in the Paris Commune shipyard in Gdynia occupied their workplace; and most of the factories downed tools. No demand was formulated at once: today everyone explains that it was a matter of supporting 'the folk in the Lenin' and pouring into the breach which they had opened, with the feeling that victory was possible.

The Strike Committees are flourishing. Here the management falls over itself to negotiate; elsewhere they barricade themselves in. Everywhere two decisions of the



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